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OF
FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON, M.A.



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LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

FRED. W. ROBERTSON, M.A.

INCUMBENT OF TRINITY CHAPEL, BRIGHTON, 1847-53.

EDITED BY

STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

PEOPLE'S EDITION.



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P R E F A C E .

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IN response to many earnest requests made on behalf of the Working Men, a cheap edition of Mr. Robertson's Life and Letters is here presented.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N .



—o—

THE "Life and Letters of Frederick W. Robertson" has now been two years before the public, and has passed through four editions. It is hoped that the present edition will bring the book into contact with a larger circle of readers. The matter is in all essential respects identical with that of the original two volumes. No abbreviations have been made; a few alterations only in the arrangement of the letters seemed advisable, and a few additional notes have been inserted. Not one of the letters has been omitted: on the contrary, a few are added, which have come to hand since 1865.

The rapid sale of the previous editions proves the undiminished interest of the public in Mr. Robertson's life and character. The testimony of the reviews to the influence and value of his teaching, whether in sermons or letters, has been generous and comprehensive. Nor has this been confined to those who are in harmony with the tone of his mind, or agree with his opinions. A tolerance, a just weight given to his life, as distinguished from his theological views—a desire to find out the good and not the evil in the man whom they, nevertheless, oppose as a teacher, have marked the generality of the Evangelical, Anglican, and Dissenting reviews. It is pleasant to feel how much in twelve years the tone of criticism has altered for the better. There have been, with two miserable exceptions, no senseless imputations of infidelity or rationalism, no implied slander, no attempts to push forward 'the truth' by depreciating or staining Mr. Robertson's character. The educated and gentlemanly partisans of that school which most

strongly opposes Mr. Robertson's theology have spoken of him with kindness and Christian charity. Of those who have reversed this mode of action I need not speak. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin.

It has seemed to me, in sending out this book in the form in which it will probably continue permanent, that this is the fitting place to speak of a few of the more salient criticisms which have been made upon the biography and its subject.

It has been said by some critics that there is no adequate account given in this book of the 'extraordinary' alteration in Robertson's opinions which took place at Cheltenham. But there was very little to record till the moment of change arrived. Like all radical changes, it was the product of numberless small, and in themselves unnoticeable things—passing conversations, passing events, slight shocks, the books he read, the reflex action of his sermons on his own mind, and the set which the current of his thoughts took under the general influences I have described in the text. It was a great change, but not greater than that which occurs again and again in the history of men who are forced to win faith out of doubt. It seems sudden and unexpected, but in reality it extended over three or four years. It is because we do not see the steps which led to it, and because its crisis came in a moment—that it appears to be extraordinary. But it was no more extraordinary than is the rapid development of a plant when it is removed from a soil unsuited to it into one entirely congenial to its nature. It may be said, that it is this very process of removing on which information is required, and little or none given in the biography. The fact is, all that could be given was given. There were no diaries of his feelings kept by Mr. Robertson. There were no letters written during that period which could be used. Those who knew him best seem to have known little about the workings of his mind, and all that they knew has been embodied in the biography. It was a slow and insensible growth—and I do not think he was conscious himself of its full meaning till just before the crisis came.

Moreover, even had he written diaries at that time of his spiritual life—had he dissected himself in these, and watched hour by hour the progress of his soul, and recorded it—I would not have given it to the world. It is a diseased state of the public mind which demands to look into the heart of a man and to see it in all its nakedness: and nothing would have induced me to gratify this morbid curiosity. There are persons who wish to have everything explained to them with mathematical precision—even the secret progress of the soul. I am glad not to have satisfied such persons—and if I could I would not have satisfied them.

The *Record* newspaper, to which my thanks are due for the striking confirmation which its review has given to Robertson's severe judgment of its mission and spirit, has brought against me two charges of inaccuracy. It contradicts my declaration that it had reasserted, after Robertson's death, a charge of socialistic opinions against him. In reply, I quote the passage on which my opinion was founded (*Record* newspaper, December 27, 1853). 'It will be

remembered that Mr. Maurice, Mr. Kingsley, the late Mr. Robertson of Brighton, Mr. Ross, and others of the same school, were all mixed up, a few years ago, with schemes of Christian Socialism.' Captain Robertson sent two indignant denials of this charge to the *Record*. They were inserted January 5th and January 12th, 1854; and the letter of the latter date was accompanied by an introduction, in which the editor states that the wrong done to Mr. Robertson, and complained of by his father, was 'purely imaginary.' It was not so at least to Captain Robertson, nor, as it seems, was it altogether so to the *Record*; for in its first review of Robertson's Life there occur these words:—'In the beginning of 1854, we received a long letter from Captain Robertson, defending his son from the charge of socialism, *implied in a short paragraph*, in which he was named as having been associated with Maurice and Kingsley.' The words I have italicised are a sufficient answer to the *Record's* accusation of inaccuracy. They prove, from its own columns, that if the charge of socialism was not defined, it was at least implied. Every one knows the way in which the *Record* does its work; and in this case, even after inserting Captain Robertson's two letters of contradiction, it managed, in a comment upon them, to imply the charge over again. 'We trust,' it says, 'on the contrary, that he (Mr. Robertson) was saved from falling into the abyss of error round which he seemed to sport, and that, whilst numbered with Christian Socialists,' etc., etc.

The second charge of inaccuracy is thus expressed:—'It is another of Mr. Brooke's strange blunders, to insert two letters from Mr. Maurice, which he alleges, without inquiry and contrary to fact, to have been "part of a correspondence published in the columns of the *Record*."' I reply, that I am right, and the *Record* wrong. The two letters from Mr. Maurice *did* appear in the *Record*, January 12, 1854.

Robertson has been accused of that which is called 'negative theology.' No accusation can possibly be further from the truth. If he spoke strongly against views in his opinion erroneous, he never did so without bringing forward a positive view on the subject, lest men should be left with a soul empty, swept, and garnished. His continual effort to bring into clear light the living spirit of dogmas, forms, and even of errors, marks the positive character of his teaching. Above all, he insisted on the historical reality of the Life of Christ. He preached those facts as the foundation of all spiritual life and he held that with the loss of the reality of the incarnation, the childhood, the temptation, the daily life, the miracles, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, we should lose Christianity. In this he differed, *ab initio*, from all forms of negative theology; and at the same time, it resulted from the same antecedent that he differed from every form of theology which seeks to reduce all minds to one mode of doctrinal conception. For he rested on a Life, not on a system. He did not deny the necessity of a system of theology, but he did deny the necessary permanence of any system. Christianity was founded on a Life, the spirit of which was infinite and capable of infinite expansion. It would therefore be necessarily born again and again under new forms, conditioned by the character and thought of

the several countries and ages it existed in. But all this continuance, under diverse forms, of Christianity, depended, in Robertson's mind, on the historical reality of Christ's person and Christ's life.

Probably, had he been asked what he thought of the negative 'theology, which has now intruded upon the skirts of Liberal Theology, he would have quoted Goethe's words as an answer:—'Every work of opposition is a negative work, and a negation is a non-entity. When I have called the bad bad, have I gained much by that? But if, by chance, I have called the good bad, I have done a great wrong. He who wishes to have a useful influence on his time ought to insult nothing. Let him not trouble himself about what is absurd, let him consecrate all his activity on this—on the bringing to light of new good things. He is bound not to overthrow, but to build up.'

I have quoted these wise words, because they express as clearly as possible one of the fundamental tones of Robertson's mind, and one of the chief characteristics of his teaching. It was part of his work, then, to assimilate within himself all that was true in all parties, and to exhibit the truth of which any error was a perversion by bringing it face to face with the error. There is a noble passage in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, where the false Florimell, who had been formed of 'purest snow in massy mould congealed,' and whom 'a wicked spright, yfraught with fawning guyle,' inhabited—the snow signifying the coldness, lifelessness, and slippery nature of all false representations of any truth or beauty: and the guileful spirit—the seducing nature of untruth in the garb of truth—is at last brought face to face with the true and living Florimell, 'like the true saint beside the image set,' and how then the 'enchanted damzell vanished into nought.' It is a picture of Robertson's mode of dealing with false representations of doctrinal or moral truth. He brought them face to face with the real truths they counterfeited. His teaching has had the effect of extending far beyond its usual sphere this mode of action, out of which alone a true toleration can arise, and the result has been the establishing on a wider basis of the idea of the necessary manifoldness of Christian thought which it is so important to keep before our eyes, and which we are always in danger of losing. There is, even among those who call themselves Liberal Churchmen, a tendency towards an intolerant denunciation and scorn of those whom they think less advanced than themselves. This is striking at the very keystone of the arch of their building; and, if the blows of this intolerance are continued, the result will be as fatal to the Liberal as it has been already to other parties in the Church. This sort of work is making them into a mere party; and the moment a movement in the Church becomes, in essence, a party movement, it receives the seeds of death. The Liberal school will be productive and powerful as long as every man in it is not so bound down by the exigencies of party as to lose that individuality, independence of thought, freedom of development, and variety of character and teaching, which make at present the special strength of this school of theological thought. Liberal theologians ought to see and allow, if they would make their toleration perfect and gradually win their opponents to

their side, that at present a certain class of minds cannot approach God except through the channel of Evangelicalism, and another only through the channel of High Churchism, just as these classes in their turn should see that the more modern form of theology is necessary as a means of arriving at God to another cast of mind and character. It is this union in diversity which ought to be seized as the first principle of a Church, and to the reception of this principle Robertson's teaching, in spite of his intolerance of a certain type of Evangelicalism, directly tended and is tending.

I may mention, in connection with the above, that those Evangelicals who repudiate with pain the *Record* as their exponent, have complained that Mr. Robertson did not do justice to them, that he speaks of them in an unchristian manner, and that I have disfigured the pages of the Biography by exhibiting a hatred of Evangelicalism.

With regard to myself, I have consistently refrained from doing that which has been imputed to me. I have known too many noble workers and Christian warriors belonging to that school to speak of it with hatred. I confess that I abhor the spirit in which the *Record* and its followers and admirers strive to defend their position of infallibility and persecution, and I think it the very spirit of the Devil: but I equally hate that spirit when it is manifested by any school, Anglican, Tractarian, or Liberal. I do not abhor it because it may belong to this or that party—I abhor it because it is the contradiction and the enemy of Christianity; and I inserted that letter of Robertson's which has been so much spoken of, because I believe that the fierce language he used was well deserved, and I hoped that it would cling—because he was there attacking, not religious feelings or intellectual error in doctrine, but a base and lying spirit, and that to brand it with a name which expressed its infamy was clearly a righteous act. But I should as soon have thought of confounding all Evangelicalism with the *Record* as I should have thought of confounding all Christianity with denunciation of the religious opinions of others. It is true I have said that Evangelicalism had a weakening effect upon Robertson, and that when he escaped from it he sprang from a dwarf into a giant, and I suppose it is the extreme truth of that—it lies on the surface—which has irritated these critics. But they have quite mistaken me. I do not hold that Evangelicalism has a weakening effect upon all men. It would be ridiculous to say that their system enfeebled such men as Scott, Wilberforce, or Venn. On the contrary, it strengthened them, and they could not have done their work in an atmosphere of Liberal theology. But Robertson was differently constituted. That air which they breathed easily, choked Robertson, and change of air gave him life, power, and mental energy. I spoke of the effect of Evangelicalism, not on all men, but on *this* man; and to accuse me of intolerance in stating a fact of this kind is like accusing an Englishman of insular exclusiveness because he says that he could not live with any pleasure under the irritating, daily restrictions of French Imperialism.

With regard to Robertson himself, I have always felt, and I have stated it,

that he showed scant justice to the Evangelical School. He undervalued their efforts, and he did not allow sufficient merit to their theology. It was the only exception to his large and healthy tolerance. But he was a man and not an angel, and I never attempted to exhibit him as superhumanly perfect. There are few who arrive at faultless tolerance, and those who do, often do so from a defectiveness in their nature of noble anger and enthusiasm. I confess I would, in many cases, rather keep the latter with the spice of intolerance which distils from it, than, in losing the intolerance, find the man afflicted with a rigid prudence and a cold indifference. Moreover Robertson had, as I have said, some excuse. In London, and in great towns, the poison of religious virulence is diluted by the multitude of opinions—in the country the distance at which clergymen live from one another disperses the venom. But in places like Cheltenham and Brighton it is concentrated, and Robertson being almost alone, with one or two exceptions who were passive, found it coming drop by drop upon his head. It is scarcely in human nature not to feel indignant and sometimes to let loose one's indignation, and it is not unnatural, as in Robertson's case, to fall into the mistake that the spirit he suffered from in Brighton was the characteristic spirit of the school which was foremost in the attack upon him.

The criticism which the Dissenting Reviews have given to Robertson's career has been uniformly generous, and marked by a fresh and intellectual appreciation of his life and work. This generosity is the more remarkable because Robertson used now and then somewhat strong expressions about Dissenters in his recoil from their want of union, and from their consequent loss of power.

On looking back upon the last few years, and seeking for the results which have flowed from Robertson's Sermons, and from the publication of his Letters, perhaps the greatest is the extension of liberal religious thought among those who would not have received it from any other man. It has filtered into the minds of thousands who would refuse to read the works of others of the Liberal school, but who cannot help reading Robertson. His teaching, for example, is largely modifying Evangelicalism, because the higher Evangelicalism is capable of modification. In Ireland, and especially in Dublin, Robertson has had a very decided influence upon the preaching of many of the clergymen. In England, I have heard from every quarter, of men of anti-liberal tendencies being changed—the whole basis of their theological thinking altered—by the reading of his sermons. It is not difficult to find the reason of this. The fault of most of the sermons of the Liberal school is a want of emotion. They are often too purely efforts of the intellect. Often they want fervour—personal enthusiasm for Christ, pietistic warmth—appeals to the heart. In one word, they want the very element which made the sermons of the early Evangelicals tell so forcibly upon their hearers. Now Robertson possessed this fervent emotional piety, and he had derived it from his early connection with Evangelicalism. Such men as Simeon, Newton, and others had an almost mystical ardour of devotion, from which Robertson had drunk deeply. This was increased in him by his eager reading of such sermons as those of Newman and

Manning, who were as fervent as Simeon and Martyn upon another side of Christian feeling. His early sermons exhibit a passionate exaltation of religious emotion, in which thought and logic are all but consumed in love. Afterwards, when he changed, this element remained in him beneath his intellectual work, and made it warm and glowing; and it is owing to the subtle and insensible influence of this Evangelical element, that he has crept into the hearts of so many of that school, and introduced into their teaching the leaven of liberal theology.

I do not find that Robertson has had any wide-spread influence upon the High Church party. This party is far more rigid in its system than the Evangelical, and though more tolerant in words, is less inclined to real toleration. The Evangelicals have the natural intolerance which accompanies a strictly dogmatic system, but the High Church party have not only dogmatic intolerance, but, in addition, priestly intolerance. Robertson's views on the nature of the Priesthood and on the nature of the Sacraments shut him out completely from the sphere of the High Churchmen. They always speak of him kindly and with gentlemanly forbearance, but they reject him utterly and with rigid logic from any union with them. While ready, with a somewhat patronizing dignity, to admit of his life having claims on their admiration—they are too firmly wedded to their ecclesiastical theory, which Robertson repudiated, to permit his influence to affect them.

On the more advanced school of Liberal theologians Robertson has also had very little influence. He is not Radical enough in his views. He is not fond enough of destroying. He has too little to do with the intellectual side of Christianity, and too much to do with the emotional, for their pleasure. They wonder at his being so widely read. They admire his genius, reverence his life, but they find his theology weak and behind the age. They do not seem to understand that the generality of men really want for life, not an intellectual but a heartfelt religion; and that it is because Robertson has given them the latter in conjunction with a fair amount of Liberal thought and of culture that he has become the cherished companion, in his Sermons and Letters, of so large a mass of their countrymen. For it is not so much on declared followers of any particular school that Robertson has had the widest influence. It is upon that numerous class of men who are weary of going to church at all, who exist apart from any distinct denomination, who wish to be religious, but who have turned away, sick at heart, from religions, that Robertson's teaching has told with the greatest effect.

Whether this influence will be permanent or not is another question. One portion of it will, I am sure, be permanent; that portion which bears on the moral life and spiritual being of men. To all in spiritual difficulty, in doubt, or in trouble—to all whom sorrow has touched or whom suffering has enfeebled—to all those spirits whose sensitive organization has made life so subtle in its varieties of feeling, so difficult to live, owing to the various aspects in which to such persons both action and thought present themselves—he will always be the

comforter and the guide of the way to the highest Comfort. To all who are perplexed with casuistry, with the solution of peculiar cases of moral action in which two duties appear to clash, or in which of two duties the highest is to be discovered and chosen—to all who wish, by the accurate performance of the smallest duties of life, to reach the starting point of the higher life where Christ replaces the Law in our hearts by the Gospel, and coerced obedience to the moral law is succeeded by the willing obedience which love renders to a righteous Father—Robertson will always be a helper and a director. But considered only as a theological teacher, I doubt if his influence will be permanent. I do not see how it can last in the rapid advance of the river of religious thought in England.

I will try in conclusion of this Introduction to mark as distinctly as possible Robertson's theological position. He represents the transition period of the theological movement of this century in England. He was partly a prophet of the old, partly of the new. Hence he is a favourite with all those minds who in this age of inquiry have not determined their position. The religious Radical, while admiring his religious thinking, looks down upon his theological teaching. The defined High Churchman and Evangelical adopt the same position. The true Liberal clearly recognizes Robertson's position and work, but at the same time holds that to fix himself into another man's mould when time and knowledge are advancing, would deny not only the necessity of progress, but even the principles on which Robertson insisted. But there are thousands, on as it were a kind of theological bridge, to whom Robertson's teaching is dear, and whom he helps to see their position. Representing, as he did, the transitional period some time before it appeared, these men find themselves reflected in him. Some of them cross over to the bank of Liberal Theology, others return to the shore they had left. He has helped them to find certainty of opinion, not only by showing them to themselves, but by the whole drift of his moral teaching, which above all else urges men to be true to their convictions.

Again, his spiritual life, itself travelling through so many phases, has an attraction for such men. They see their own fluctuations there, and either pass on with him to his secure position, or go back, finding that they cannot accept his conclusions. As long as this large section of men who are unsettled exists, Robertson's influence as a theological teacher will endure. But the moment a man, having used Robertson thus as a means of determining his position, becomes a declared Liberal, or retires into the opposite ranks, Robertson, as a theological teacher, though not as an ethical or religious teacher, ceases to be of any use to him. Therefore when Liberal Christianity, assisted as it is by the march of social, scientific, and political events, becomes the regnant form of Christianity among the educated classes in England, Robertson will cease to possess his present wide-spread influence as a theologian. Nevertheless he will always be read. As a theological teacher he will always be useful at that point of an inquiring man's religious life, when his opinions are floating in solution.

At the time of his death High Churchmen tried to claim Robertson as tending ✓

to their views. Since his death Evangelical reviewers have declared that he would have returned, if he had lived, to their orthodox fold. So much devotion, such love of Christ, has seemed to them quite inexplicable to one who was wandering on the dark mountains of scepticism. But such a return would have been impossible to Robertson. The principles which formed the very back-bone of his mind, were in direct opposition to principles which have been very generally enunciated in the late discussions; such as the assumed infallibility of the Bible on all questions; the necessity of stifling doubt; the repression of all who stir up theological discussions; the duty of keeping strictly in the old paths; the habits of shutting the eyes to difficulties and of answering opponents without the requisite knowledge; the denial of the development of doctrine and of religious progress, and the general deprecation, as an evil to be dreaded, of active and critical inquiry. In none of these things could Robertson have concurred. He liked war and excitement. He believed in progress. He had no fear of God's truth being overwhelmed. To him Christianity could not be in danger. I do not think he could have breathed in an atmosphere of obstinate theological optimism. It was not stir, or inquiry, or scepticism, which he feared, but unrelenting conservatism and stagnation; and there are few who will not believe that he was right, few who will not declare, in spite of all our divisions and troubles, that the Church is in a healthier condition than it was twenty years ago—who will not hope, taking the very excitement as the ground of the hope, that the Church is advancing towards that condition of well-established health which is characterized by the possession, not of the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind. A writer in the *Revue des deux Mondes* of February 1, 1866, says:—‘Should you ask now what is the present condition of Christianity in France, I answer, look at the two opposed camps where a remnant of life exists, one for the attack, the other for the defence of the Christian faith. Then look beyond these two camps, and what do you see remaining? An innumerable crowd, inert, inanimate, a veritable Dead Sea in which no living being dwells. That is the world you must reconquer. This “insouciance—torpeur—engourdissement” of the souls of men—this is the wound which is eating into our society—this is the real disease of the age.’ Now it is this state, which this writer so deplores, from which we in England, at least, are rescued. We live in a world of religious excitement, from the highest to the lowest ranks. We are going through a religious revolution, and it is not impossible that we shall manage it with as much wisdom as we managed, in 1688, our political revolution. ‘It was not very long ago,’ says another French writer, whom I quote from memory, ‘since some sentimental politicians discovered the model empire in China. They contrasted Europe, torn with theological disputes—rent asunder with wars and revolutions—labouring like a ship in a hurricane, with the quiet national life and the uninterrupted paradise of peace which for centuries had prevailed in China. But what is the true view? China is dying of prolonged infancy. Europe is still full of life—of faith in the future—of belief in itself.’

If we insist on reducing the Church to the standard of China, it will die and

deserve to die ; if we accept, as necessary elements of the age in which we live, the excitement, controversy, criticism, revolutionary opinions, which are now disturbing us, and set ourselves to find means of bringing order out of disorder, we shall step soon into a more vigorous existence than ever. I am certain that would have been Robertson's opinion. I shall not readily forget the fervour with which I heard him read, " Ring in the Christ which is to be."

No one holding such principles could have found a home in Evangelicalism, or have retired into that High Church system which holds that the Christianity—and practice and ritual—of the past are better than those of the present or the future. I am far from depreciating the noble and honourable work which the two Conservative parties in the English Church have done and may yet do. There are principles at the root of Ritualism, or rather lying hidden in it, which it would be a misfortune to the Church to lose, and which will probably, as time goes on, shake off the mists of error which now conceal them and come forth into clear light to help forward the march of Christianity. There are hopes, and I think with good grounds, that the large Evangelical party in the Church will soon, if it has not done it already, take up more Liberal ground and revive into a Liberal-Conservative condition. This is earnestly to be desired, for it is most important that there should be a strong opposition to prevent the Liberal theologians from going too fast for Christian safety. But one thing at least is necessary for the existence of such an opposition—that it should allow that Theology has not reached its ultimate expression, and that it should reserve its strength, not to oppose all extension of Theology, but only an unconsidered, hasty, and unwise extension. Theology is not Christianity—it is the scientific exposition of Christianity ; and to declare that it is now perfect is to degrade it from the ranks of all true sciences, which are always relative, perfectible, and therefore cannot be delivered to man in a moment. Those who say that no higher views of truth can be given or discovered by Theology, say that we have exhausted the meaning of the Words of Christ—tantamount to the absurdity of saying that we have exhausted the Infinite—and make of Theology not the temple, but the sepulchre of the human mind.

To views such as I have expressed in these latter pages the whole of Robertson's teaching tended. Those who embark upon the river of his thought, and do not leave it, are carried out into this sea. It has its dangers, its quicksands, its deceitful currents ; and it needs, especially now, wary sailing and good pilots ; but it ought to be a subject of earnest thought whether it is better to be sailing there, on to something better in the Infinite, or riding at anchor in a tranquil land-locked bay.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THERE would seem to be no apology necessary for presenting to the Public the Life and Letters of FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON.

The abiding influence of his published writings on all those readers who are capable of being interested in spiritual questions and in Christian experience, has awakened in them a desire to know more of his career.

Constant allusions made in the Public Press and in Reviews to his pre-eminence as a Preacher—the wide diffusion of his Sermons, not only over this Kingdom, but also over part of the Continent and of America—the interest in his teaching, which now (more than twelve years after his death) is increasing rather than diminishing, have led men to ask whether his life corresponded to the Ideal pictured in his writings—whether his private letters would be worthy companions of his public utterances.

The friends who lived with him and loved him—his Congregation, and especially those Working Men of Brighton with whom he was connected—have long and eagerly wished to have some record of his life.

Those, on the other hand, who knew him not, but who since his death have learned to reverence him as their Teacher—who have found in his sermons a living source of Impulse, a practical direction of Thought, a key to many of the problems of Theology, and, above all, a path to Spiritual Freedom,—these, with an amount of feeling rarely given to one personally unknown, have hoped to possess some more intimate memorial of him, without whose life they had not lived.

For these reasons this book has been undertaken.

The publication of Mr. Robertson's Letters was considered to be of great importance. They seemed to add a personal interest to his Sermons, to explain fully his mode of thought, to indicate the source and progress of many of his views, and to supplement his general teaching. They are full of tender human thought, of subtle and delicate feeling, and of much tried and suggestive experience.

They possess also, in common with his Sermons, a peculiar literary interest. This interest lies not so much in the originality of their ideas as in the mode in which these ideas are represented. The choice of words in them is remarkable. There is sometimes a happy indefiniteness which belongs to and which suggests the infinite nature of the things discussed. A spirit pervades them which influences unconsciously their reader, and renders him receptive of their truths, by inducing in him a kindred tone of heart. Even Robertson's slight sketches of

an idea, traced perhaps in a single sentence, contain the materials for a finished composition. If he is not a Creator, he is eminently a lucid Interpreter of thought. It is in this power of apt, logical, and striking expression that the chief *literary* interest of his writings consists.

I cannot but believe also that the noble, truthful life he lived, and the 'very courageous' battle which he fought, will have an influence as real and as helpful as his Sermons.

The inadequacy with which this Life has been represented cannot be more a subject of regret to his friends than it is to myself. The fault can only, perhaps, be pardoned for the sake of the love and reverence with which the following pages have been written.

I have to thank many of his friends, and especially his father, Captain Robertson, for their assistance and advice.

I wish to draw attention to the interesting letters written from the Tyrol to Mrs. Robertson, and collected in the first Appendix, and to those from some of his friends, which are inserted in the Text and in the second Appendix.*

In conclusion, I must regret the delay in the appearance of this book. It is due partly to my absence from England, but chiefly to my desire to make the collection of Mr. Robertson's letters as complete as possible. The arrival of new matter has often compelled me to recast whole chapters, and I have waited for months in the hope of obtaining an important Correspondence, and found at last my hope in vain.

STOFFORD A. BROOKE.

LONDON: *Sept.* 15, 1865.

* In this Edition, incorporated with the body of the work.

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LIFE AND LETTERS

OF THE

REV. FRED. W. ROBERTSON



CHAPTER I.

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Letters from May, 1838, to June, 1840.

FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON, the eldest of the seven children of Frederick and Sarah Robertson, was born February 3, 1816, in London, at the house of his grandfather, Colonel Robertson, a distinguished officer, who was wounded in the service.

His father, who is still alive, was a captain in the Royal Artillery. Two of his brothers, Charles Duesbury, of the Royal Engineers,* and Harry, of the 60th Royal Rifles, won frequent 'honourable mention' in the Kaffir war. The third, Struan, was a captain in the Royal South Lincoln Militia. They all survived him, but before he had reached his twenty-fifth year he

* He is now Lieut.-Colonel in his corps. He received the brevet rank of Major for his services in the Kaffir war.

had grieved over the death of his three sisters.

The first five years of his childhood were passed at Leith Fort. In 1821, his father, then Captain in the Royal Artillery, retired on half pay in order to attend to the education of his children, left Leith and settled at Beverley, in Yorkshire. There he personally instructed his son for four years, and then sent him to the grammar-school of the town, under the Rev. G. P. Richards.

In 1829, the family went to Tours, where young Robertson studied the classics with an English tutor, attended a French seminary, and laid the foundation of his accurate knowledge of the French language. In consequence of the revolution of 1830, his father returned to England, and

placed the boy, now nearly sixteen years old, in the New Academy, Edinburgh, under the late Rev. John Williams, afterwards Archdeacon of Cardigan.

He owed much to the careful education and watchfulness of his parents. They kept him apart from evil influences, and made his home his most honoured recollection. This seclusion, and the books he was induced to read in childhood, were both so calculated to develop his character in a true direction, that he mentions them afterwards in some MS. notes, written at Winchester, as two of the special mercies with which God had blessed his infancy. The loneliness which is more or less the lot of the eldest of the family, soon created in him a thoughtfulness full of imagination, and a spirit of inquiry which supplied him with the materials for a silent self-education. But on this account he became neither morbid nor unnatural. On the contrary, he was a radiant and eager child, full of healthful enjoyment of life, delighting in air, and sunlight, and active exercise. His happy childhood at Leith Fort was a cherished memory of his ministerial life; and he looked back upon it with a pleasure deepened by the necessarily sedentary nature of his profession. In 1849, he writes from Brighton:—

My pony, and my cricket, and my rabbits, and my father's pointers, and the days when I proudly carried his game-bag, and my ride home with the old gamekeeper by moonlight in the frosty evenings, and the boom of the cannon, and my father's orderly, the artilleryman who used to walk with me hand-in-hand—these are my earliest recollections.

Even at that time there seems to

have been nothing in external nature which did not give him pleasure, and awake in him a vivid interest. The fresh winds, and sunlight, and clear waters, which he enjoyed at Leith, seem to have infused their own spirit into his receptive organisation. He wandered over the country with an open eye and heart, and found in every walk and ride something to admire and to love. He had a child's affection and reverence for animals, and especially for birds. He studied their natural history; he watched them to their haunts; he rejoiced in the freedom of their life as if it had been his own; he even began a book in which he made drawings of them, with notes on their habits and habitations. Many will remember the passage in one of his lectures on Poetry, in which he notices with enthusiasm Wilson's work on 'Birds,' and Waterton's 'Wanderings,' and describes with the minuteness of affection the series of stuffed birds which illustrated falconry in the Exhibition of 1851. 'I have visited,' he says, 'the finest museums in Europe, and spent many a long day in watching the habits of birds in the woods, hidden and unseen by them; but I never saw the reproduction of life till I saw these.'

He describes himself, in boyhood, 'as iron in strength, broad and stout.' He excelled in many games and athletic exercises, and was the leader of all the daring exploits of his companions. To this he joined a love of reading and of quiet remarkable at his age. On the brightest day he would become entranced in some tale of chivalry or imagination which charmed him into stillness. He loved to fancy himself a knight—seeking adventure, redressing wrongs, laying down his life

for maidens in distress; and often for hours together the vividness of these imaginary pictures would separate him from the commonly thoughtless activity of a boy's life, and exile him from his companions. Lying at the root of much of this dreaminess, was the sensitiveness of nerve and feeling which so strongly marked and influenced his whole existence. It betrayed its presence during boyhood in his shy and sometimes defiant manner, and in a settled self-mistrust, often sinking into hopelessness. 'Deficiency of hope,' he says himself, 'is the great fault of my character.'

Such a temperament, without his strong will and stern sense of duty, would naturally have led him into idleness. But it was not so with him. In childhood he learned quickly, and mastered fully what he had learnt. His memory was retentive, and in later years he could recall with ease page after page of books which he had not read since his boyhood. But this power never stole from him his conviction that perseverance in labour was the only foundation of real knowledge. He was an intense worker. He never left a subject till he had done his utmost to exhaust it, and to examine it in all its bearings. At the Academy in Edinburgh, his toil was incessant, and he soon took a high place in his class. Though without the advantage of previous training in the lower forms, he gained at the end of the session the first prizes for Latin verse, English prose, the French language, and French recitation; and contested so sharply the prize given to the best Greek scholar, that the decision was referred to Professor Sandford, who gave it in favour of the Dux of the Academy — George Moncrieff, with

whom, as boy and man, Robertson maintained an unbroken friendship.

All this success surprised no one more than himself; he continually wrote home in depreciation of his work. This self-mistrust made him even then acutely conscious of small errors. In composition, he magnified slight failures in the rhythm and style of a sentence into grave faults; he was intolerant of a misplaced stop; he shrank with all the over-subtle purism of a boy from a mispronunciation or an antiquated pronunciation of words. He carried this humility and sensitiveness into morals; the slightest deviation from truthfulness in words or truthfulness in action was abhorrent to his nature. His mother said of him, 'I never knew him tell a lie;' and he would rather have lost every prize at the Academy, than owe one to foreign help or to the usual aid which boys seek from translations.

The principal of the Academy soon recognised the character he had to deal with, and gave him repeated encouragement, and of this he speaks with grateful appreciation. Without sympathy he would have been hopeless, although he would not have ceased to work; for there was mingled in him the womanliness which seeks for external help, and the manliness which performs a duty even in loneliness. To romance, sensitiveness, delicacy, humility, great gentleness, he added, even at this early age, a practical view of life, calm good sense, steady adherence to right, unselfishness, and a courage at once enthusiastic and prudent. Two letters, written when he was sixteen years old, to his mother and brother, shortly after the cholera appeared at Edinburgh, will illustrate some of these points of character:—

February 26, 1832.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—You need be under no apprehension concerning the cholera, as the cases here, upon an average, are one a week, or something of that kind. If, however, it should increase in violence, I have made up my mind to remain here. In the first place, I should bring infection home, and it would be extremely selfish to bring others into danger merely for my own private safety. In the next place, instead of escaping it, I might only rush into danger in my journey. I am sorry to say, that because I kept a good place at first in my class, the Rector said to several persons that he expected me to be second at the end of the year. He will, I am sorry to say, soon find out his mistake, as I am terribly behind-hand in several things. Ten o'clock P.M.—I have just finished fagging hard for to-morrow.

July 2, 1832.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Tell papa that my suspicions about the French composition prize were but too well founded; for this morning, Monsieur Braed, after I had endeavoured for a long time to get it out of him, acknowledged that he had given the prize to Moncrieff. He then put me in a very trying situation, by asking me to recite it (Moncrieff's) on the exhibition day. I told him I could not decide, but would give him an answer to-morrow. Though it is hard upon me to be thus made the herald of my own defeat, I have determined to comply, partly for Moncrieff's sake, and partly because I am determined that whatever I feel, it shall not be visible. A few days ago, the Academical Club, or rather a deputation, waited on the Rector to announce the decision upon the English verses given in a long time ago. The seventh, sixth, and fifth classes were summoned into the Rector's class-room, and the prize was decided to have been gained by Terrot in my class. After he had recited his verses, we were told that all the other copies which had been given in were very meritorious, but that the two next in

merit to Terrot's were so equal, that they had been unable to decide between them. I was astonished by hearing my motto read out as one of them, and still more so when I was called upon to recite them. Imagine me standing elevated upon the Rector's platform, and feeling more like a criminal than anything else. I trembled so violently that I could not hold the paper steady, and do not know how I managed to get to the end. The deafening claps of the boys were the first thing that brought me to my senses. I cannot imagine what I shall do when I recite the French in the public hall with several hundred spectators, when I felt so uncomfortable by just reading before a hundred and twenty boys, most of whom I knew, the masters, and a few of the directors, and the Academical Club.

At the end of the session he left the Academy, and, under the care of Mr. Terrot, afterwards Bishop of Edinburgh, attended the various classes at the University, and at the age of eighteen returned home, bringing with him a large amount of multifarious knowledge and many memories of a pleasant life and profitable study. Of his general reading at Edinburgh there is no record, but he had devoted himself eagerly to practical chemistry and physical geography. There remains among his papers a MS. book full of notes of Professor Jameson's lectures, and illustrated by drawings, which manifest the artistic talents which he afterwards cultivated, and then, when he had attained to some excellence, characteristically despised.

But his interest in all these things was small in comparison with his enthusiasm for a military life. This was literally born with him. At Leith, before he was five years old, he drank in, with all the eagerness of a boy, the intoxicating aroma of his father's profession. 'I was rocked and cradled,'

he writes, 'to the roar of artillery, and the very name of such things sounds to me like home. A review, suggesting the conception of a real battle, impresses me to tears; I cannot see a regiment manœuvre, nor artillery in motion, without a choking sensation.'

The traditions of his family suggested and fostered this passionate love of arms.* The conversation at home was full of recollections of bivouac and battle, and of the daring exploits of Sir Charles Napier, who was his father's personal friend and comrade in arms. He writes from the Academy to his brother, begging that the miniature fort in the garden at home might not be blown up till he arrived. He argued daily with his French masters on military engineering. It is no wonder that, on leaving Edinburgh, the secret wish of his heart to enter the army had grown into a settled purpose. This was not, however, the intention of his father, who considered that the character of his son, and his deep religious feeling, were unfitted for a barrack life. The Church, was, therefore, proposed to him as a profession; but his answer was decisive—'Anything but that: I am not fit for it.'

He was then (1833) articled to Mr. Borton, a solicitor at Bury St. Edmunds, and passed a year in his office. But the sedentary nature of the work broke down his health; and Captain

Robertson discovered that his son had adopted a profession which he detested, only through a feeling of chivalrous obedience. It was then resolved that he should follow the bent of his genius. An application was made to the Horse Guards for a commission. It was refused on the ground of age. But his mother's family had been fortunate enough to do the King, when Prince William, some service, and the refusal was retracted. His name was placed upon the list for a cavalry regiment serving in India. He was enraptured, and immediately began to study for his profession with enthusiasm. He went to stay with his brother in the Engineers, at Chatham, to gain an insight into practical engineering. His whole soul was in his work. He recalls in later letters that time:—'On that road I had walked and ridden, oh, how often; exulting in the future, fearless, full of hope, and feeling the perfection of the present; days when I was prodigal of happiness.'

A spirit so buoyant and enthusiastic fitted him well for the army, and he became a first-rate rider, a good shot, and an excellent draughtsman. He omitted nothing likely to make him a faithful and useful officer. In hope and work two years were thus passed by, during which he lived with his family at Cheltenham. There it was that Captain Robertson, under the impression that his application to the King had been forgotten, again proposed to his son the profession of the Church, and again was answered by a firm refusal. The temptations to which he would be exposed in the army were strongly set before him, but he could not believe that they were any real barriers against his

* Capt. Robertson, in June, 1805, was embarked on board the *Victory*, when Nelson's fleet of twelve sail of the line took troops on board at Barbadoes and went in pursuit of the Toulon squadron, and, whilst serving with the land and naval forces on the coast of North America in 1813, was mentioned in terms of commendation in four different despatches. At the capture of Hampton, in Virginia, he stormed and captured, with signal bravery, the enemy's last field-piece.

entrance into it; on the contrary, with his usual desire for some positive outward evil to contend with, he imagined that it was his peculiar vocation to bear witness to God, to set the example of a pure and Christian life in his corps, to be, as he said, 'the Cornelius of his regiment.' The trained obedience of an army to one head harmonised with his own strong conception of the beauty of order and the dignity of duty. All the impulses of his character to self-sacrifice, chivalry, daring, romantic adventure, the conquest of oppression, the living of life intensely, he looked forward to satisfying as a soldier; and he believed that the active out-door existence of a campaign, with its danger and excitement, would suit his physical temperament, and tend to neutralise his constitutional nervousness.

Associated in remarkable contrast with his vivid outward life and activity at this time, was an inward life, peculiarly sensitive, subtle in thought, more subtle still in feeling, full of poetical and religious sentiment. It was impossible to express in prose the minuter shades of feeling which passed over his heart as boyhood grew into youth, and he began at this period to read poetry with greater eagerness and to write verses. His own efforts are, strange to say, characterised by almost no imagination, and curiously devoid of poetical talent. The influence of Pope, of whom he was now an ardent admirer, seems to have clogged all his attempts at English verse. Striving after the terseness of thought and sharp clearness of expression which mark his model, he naturally became incapable of putting into verse delicate dreams of intuitive feeling. Perhaps it was

owing to his discovery of this want that he ceased for a time to read Pope, and turned in preference to Byron and Shakspeare.

To two great objects—the profession of arms which he had chosen, and the service of Christ in that profession—he now devoted himself wholly. They filled his life, and for both of them he read carefully. It marks his honesty and sincerity of purpose, that immediately on making sure of his commission in the Indian cavalry, he gave himself up to preparation for service in that country. He would have thought it a sin against truthfulness of character, if he had adopted a career without a special training for his work. With this purpose he studied the early history and geography of India, and the characters of its various populations. He mapped the campaigns and made himself master of the strategical movements of the British generals in that country. The fortunes of India, and the constitution which the English had elaborated for their large dependency, became familiar to him. It is interesting to observe how fondly he recalled at Brighton these youthful studies, how he followed the course of the Sikh war, and read with careful pleasure the exploits of Napier* and the story of Major Edwardes' career. In a series of lectures delivered at Brighton, and unfortunately lost, he treated of Christianity as it would come into contact with Hindooism with the same wide grasp of principles, and in the same manner, as he dealt with the advent of Christ to the Greek, Roman, and Barbarian. The

* A picture of Sir Charles Napier was hung in his study, and he used to call it his household god.

seed of which these lectures were the flower, was sown at this time.

Parallel with his military reading, in rather a strange contrast, ran his religious reading. Sometimes both glided into one another, as when, in the hope of advancing Christ's kingdom, he devoted a portion of his time to the history of Indian missions, and the study of the reasons of their small success; and with a rare wisdom, the need of which has at last been recognised, gained all the information accessible to him upon the religion of the Hindoos. At other times, his reading was entirely theological. Towards the end of 1836, he seems to have almost given up the hope of hearing favourably from the Horse Guards, and, with a kind of presentiment, began to labour at books on Evidences and on Prophecy. Then again, as if the hope of a military life had reawakened, he analysed the Jugurthine war. In his common-place book may be seen the fluctuations of his mind between the Church and the Army as professions, or, at least, his desire to bring Christianity into a soldier's life.

All these fair hopes were destined to disappointment. Looking back now on his career as a clergyman, and considering the wide influence which his published sermons have had in England, it is interesting to trace how he was apparently impelled by circumstances into the clerical profession.

In March, 1837, he met Mr. Davies, now Vicar of Tewkesbury, at the house of a common friend in Cheltenham. A close friendship soon sprung up between them. Mr. Davies, believing that he saw in Robertson all the elements which would form a successful and devoted minister of the Church,

endeavoured to dissuade him from entering the army.* He replied, 'that the matter had been already settled, that application had been made long ago, and interest employed to obtain a commission.' He added, 'I do not become a soldier to win laurels: my object is to do good.' Mr. Davies, however, did not desist till he had obtained from him a promise to allow the whole matter to be reconsidered. His mind, however, remained fixed in its previous resolution. Three weeks only before he entered Oxford, his father said to him, 'I think you had better reconsider your plans and enter the Church.' He answered, energetically, 'No, never!' The following day

* Mr. Davies thus relates the origin of their friendship:—'The daughter of Lady Trench, at whose house I met my friend, had been seriously ill. She was prevented from sleeping by the barking of a dog in one of the adjoining houses. This house was Captain Robertson's. A letter was written to ask that the dog might be removed; and so kind and acquiescent a reply was returned, that Lady Trench called to express her thanks. She was much struck at that visit by the manner and bearing of the eldest son, and, in consequence, an intimacy grew up between the families.'

This apparently trivial circumstance is mentioned, because in one of Mr. Robertson's papers a curious allusion to it has been found, which proves that this intimacy promoted the change of his profession. He is speaking of one of his favourite theories—that all great truths consist of two opposites which are not contradictory. 'All is free,' he says—'that is false; all is fated—that is false. All things are free and fated—that is true. I cannot overthrow the argument of the man who says that everything is fated, or, in other words, that God orders all things, and cannot change that order. If I had not met a certain person, I should not have changed my profession: if I had not known a certain lady, I should not probably have met this person: if that lady had not had a delicate daughter who was disturbed by the barking of my dog: if my dog had not barked that night, I should now have been in the dragoons, or fertilising the soil of India. Who can say that these things were not ordered, and that, apparently, the merest trifles did not produce failure and a marred existence?'

he met Mr. Daly, now the Bishop of Cashel, at Lady Trench's. It struck him as singular that Mr. Daly should ask him, so soon after his father's suggestion, 'Whether it were definitely settled that he should go into the army?' After some conversation, he inquired, 'What would you advise me to do?' Mr. Daly, who, much impressed by his unaffected piety, desired to see him in the Church, answered: 'Do as your father likes, and pray to God to direct your father aright.' His friends also at Cheltenham urged the same upon him. He spoke then to his father, and left the final decision in his hands. With a romantic instinct of self-sacrifice, which transcended the bounds of prudence, he resolved to give up the idea of his whole life. Yet he would scarcely have done this had not his strong sense of duty been appealed to by the arguments of his friends, and had not his characteristic self-mistrust disposed him to believe that he was himself the worst judge of his future profession.

His father, after anxious consideration, decided, at last, to send him up immediately to Oxford with Mr. Davies. With some difficulty, and through the interest of Mr. Churton, who wished to secure him for his college, a vacancy was found for him in Brazenose. He wrote home to state this, and added, with evidently a lingering wish for the army, 'What shall I do?' He shrunk with deep pain from completing the sacrifice. But his father wrote to say, 'Accept it;' and on May 4, 1837, he was examined and matriculated.

Five days afterwards, the long-expected letter came from the military secretary, offering him a cavalry com-

mission in the 2nd Dragoons, with the option of exchange into the 3rd, just embarking for India. Had it arrived three weeks sooner, he had never entered the Church; but arriving after his matriculation, his father considered that God had directed the circumstances, and the commission was declined.

He was now twenty-one years old, and, accepting, somewhat sternly, his destiny, he began his university career.

Before entering on residence, he spent much time with Mr. Davies. They walked daily together; and his friend, anxious lest he should have forced his inclinations, asked him frequently whether he was satisfied with what had been done. He would never answer directly, but only quietly reply, 'Wait; some day I will tell you.'

Often (Mr. Davies writes) when passing a soldier in the street, has he tightly pressed my arm, observing, 'Well, so I am to have nothing to do with them;' and at other times, 'Poor fellows, they are but little thought of; few care for their souls.' I can never forget the feeling and energetic manner in which he would quote at length the passage from Coleridge's 'Sibylline Leaves,' dwelling with marked emphasis on the lines—

As if the soldier died without a wound;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang; as if the
wretch
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not
killed;
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
No God to judge him.

It was with great delight that he told me that the application for a commission had been successful, for it would not be said that he went into the Church because he could not get into the Army.

During the summer he went up the Wye, and visited Tintern by moon-



light. Mr. Davies, who accompanied him, remembers that he always collected the servants of the several inns to evening prayers, and recalls his intense and romantic enjoyment of the scenery; and

Yet (continues Mr. Davies), with all this poetical sense of life and nature, I never knew any one who took a more correct view of life, and who was more anxious to deal in a manly and Christian way with its realities.

At the time to which I refer I never knew him otherwise than cheerful, and there were times when his spirits were exuberant, times when he was in the mood of thoroughly enjoying everything. With him as I was, daily and hourly, I can testify that he was a constant and prayerful student of his Bible. . . . He possessed a very logical mind, and in argument was a close and accurate reasoner. At this time he held firmly what are understood as evangelical views, and for these he would mildly but perseveringly contend. He advocated strongly the pre-millennial advent of Christ. But one who was more free from the shibboleths of a party, or more abhorrent from anything like cant, or one who regarded others with a more large-hearted charity, I never knew.

In October 1837, Mr. Robertson became a resident at Brazenose. With his deep and cultivated interest in all the variations of religious opinion, he at once came into contact with the movement which engrossed a large portion of the most remarkable men in the university, under the leadership of John Henry Newman. Several efforts were made to induce Mr. Robertson to join this party. He had himself been much impressed by a sermon of Mr. Newman's, 'On Sin after Baptism;' and the contest which arose in his mind from his sense of the fervour and sincerity of religious

feeling which marked the Tract school, and his own instinctive recoil from the doctrines which they held, resulted in a state of deep mental depression. But depression never at any time of his life was permitted to pass the point where it merges into intellectual or spiritual slothfulness; and now, as always, it spurred him into activity. He began immediately to study critically the Acts of the Apostles, and he wrote to his father to say that he had not gone through the book before he felt satisfied that, on the subject of baptism at least, the Tractarian school was in error. With a calmer mind than before, he now endeavoured to make himself master of Mr. Newman's opinions, and to refute them. His copy of Tract 90, and of Dr. Pusey's letter to the Bishop of Oxford, are largely annotated by his answers to their arguments. He seems to have read carefully about this time, as books bearing on the whole subject—'Collier's History,' 'Calvin's Institutes,' 'Ranke's History of the Popes,' and many of the replies published at Oxford in 1838-39.

From the main conviction with regard to Mr. Newman's opinions which he then attained he never afterwards swerved. But he did not join then, or at any time, in the persecution and slander with which the Tractarians were assailed. He invariably spoke bravely—and that when brave speaking was dangerous to his position—in behalf of their manliness, devotion, and practical work.

Nor was he content with convincing himself of the errors of the prominent school at Oxford. He endeavoured to counteract its influence among his personal friends, by setting on foot a society for the purpose of prayer and

conversation on the Scriptures. It was organised, and consisted of seven members, but after lingering through a term or two it died in 1839.

The necessity of an accurate and critical knowledge of the Bible became more clear to him from this contact with various forms of religious thought. It was his habit when dressing in the morning to commit to memory daily a certain number of verses of the New Testament. In this way, before leaving the university, he had gone twice over the English version, and once and a half through the Greek. With his eminent power of arrangement, he mentally combined and recombined all the prominent texts under fixed heads of subjects. He said long afterwards to a friend, that owing to this practice, no sooner was any Christian doctrine or duty mentioned in conversation or suggested to him by what he was writing, than all the passages bearing on the point seemed to array themselves in order before him.

No change took place in his doctrinal views, which were those of the Evangelical school, with a decided leaning to moderate Calvinism. They were mingled with a rare charity and tolerance, which seem, however, in the excitement of argument, to have sometimes failed him. He took a large interest in missionary work, especially in that among the Jews. The society mentioned above, for the short term of its existence, became one of the centres of correspondence which were established in England with the leading foreign mission stations. He strove to interest others in Christian enterprise; but his enthusiasm, though not frozen, was chilled by the apathy and coldness of Oxford. To his excitable and eager temperament, the trim sys-

tem, the 'donnishness' which gave the tone to the life and studies of reading men, were dreary and sleepy and too hedged in by unelastic rules. With the Utopianism of a young man, he could not at first see that a large and varied society must be governed, not by love, but by law; that if the intellect is to be well trained, it must be restricted to a few subjects, and forbidden to travel over wider fields till it has gained sufficient power.

His Christian fervour, for which he found so little food in Oxford, he maintained by bold speaking and brave action.

I rejoice to think of him (writes one of his friends) as I knew him at Oxford—warm, and generous, and noble hearted; conspicuous for talent, irreproachable in conduct; and, what was most of all valuable, and the most cheering subject of retrospect now, one who carried the banner of the Cross without fear, and was not ashamed of Christ in a place which, though professedly consecrated to His service, offered perhaps more hindrances than helps to a decidedly Christian profession.

He read steadily, though not severely, the usual course. On every side his imagination seems to have lured him away from the confined sphere of university reading to subjects suggested by his studies. This, and, I imagine, a want of enthusiasm for collegiate life and reading, born of regret for the loss of the real profession of his heart, with the addition, perhaps, of his constitutional diffidence, were the reasons why he never aspired to collegiate honours. At first, however, he plunged eagerly, too eagerly, into work. He attended lectures for sixteen hours in a week. He mingled with his necessary labours the recreation which natural history afforded him. He listened with plea-

sure to the wit, learning, and imagination with which Dr. Buckland charmed his geological class. Plato fascinated him. The poetry, the idealism, the complete power with which the Greek philosopher used the most perfect organ of human thought, delighted a mind essentially imaginative, and a taste which demanded that thought should be expressed not only in accurate, but in polished language. Yet he saw the defects of Plato, and turned to Aristotle, to balance the scale of his thought. He studied both with untiring labour, and he declared many years afterwards that their writings, with those of Edwards, 'had passed like the iron atoms of the blood into his mental constitution.' Aristotle gradually won a great influence over his intellect; and it is possible again and again to trace in his sermons niceties of mental distinction which owe their subtlety to his intimate knowledge of the 'Ethics.' With the study of these he combined that of Bishop Butler's works, whose sermons and 'Analogy' he seems to have completely mastered. Yet he never lost his passion for Plato. He mentions him as—

One of the poets who, when his brain was throbbing, and his mind incapable of originating a thought, and his body worn and sore with exhaustion, made him know what it was to feel the jar of nerve gradually cease, and the darkness in which all life had robed itself to the imagination become light, discord pass into harmony, and physical exhaustion rise by degrees into the consciousness of power.*

These words are sufficient to mark how much he owed to the writers whom he revered, and explain much

* *Lectures on Poetry*, delivered at Brighton.

of the deep depression and strong excitement which characterised at once his life and his preaching in after years. If many a time his own imagination was refreshed and kindled by that of another, only too often also for health and mental power his imagination dominated, not over his will, but over his nerves. He was not subdued by the sad and bitter creations of his own heart, but he suffered, and suffered terribly, in conquering them.

During the beginning of his college life, the poets which seem most to have attracted him were Shelley and Coleridge; but the more his thoughtfulness deepened, the more he gave to Wordsworth a veneration which increased as life wore on, and which gained additional depth from the respect which he felt for the poet's character. The following quotation from one of his lectures on Wordsworth will show that this reverence took root at an early period in his mind. It bears testimony also to the influence which Dr. Arnold's life had exercised over him:—

I remember myself one of the most public exhibitions of this change in public feeling. It was my lot, during a short university career, to witness a transition and a reaction, or revulsion, of public feeling with respect to two great men whom I have already mentioned and contrasted. The first of these was one who was every inch a man—Arnold of Rugby. You will all recollect how in his earlier life Arnold was covered with suspicion and obloquy, how the wise men of that day charged him with latitudinarianism, and I know not with how many other heresies. But the public opinion altered, and he came to Oxford and read lectures on modern history.

Such a scene had not been seen in Oxford before. The lecture-room was too small; all adjourned to the Oxford Theatre; and

all that was most brilliant, all that was most wise and most distinguished, gathered together there. He walked up to the rostrum with a quiet step and manly dignity. Those who had loved him when all the world despised him felt that, at last, the hour of their triumph had come. But there was something deeper than any personal triumph they could enjoy; and those who saw him then will not soon forget the lesson read to them by his calm, dignified, simple step—a lesson teaching them the utter worthlessness of unpopularity or of popularity as a test of manhood's worth.

The second occasion was when, in the same theatre, Wordsworth came forward to receive his honorary degree. Scarcely had his name been pronounced than, from three thousand voices at once, there broke forth a burst of applause, echoed and taken up again and again when it seemed about to die away, and that thrice repeated—a cry in which—

Old England's heart and voice unite,
Whether she hail the wine-cup or the fight,
Or bid each hand be strong, or bid each
heart be light.

There were young eyes there filled with an emotion of which they had no need to be ashamed; there were hearts beating with the proud feeling of triumph, that, at last, the world had recognised the merit of the man they had loved so long and acknowledged as their teacher; and yet, when that noise was protracted, there came a reaction in their feelings, and they began to perceive that *that* was not, after all, the true reward and recompense for all that Wordsworth had done for England: it seemed as if all that noise was vulgarising the poet: it seemed more natural and desirable to think of him afar off in his simple dales and mountains, the high-priest of Nature, weaving in honoured poverty his songs to liberty and truth, thau to see him there, clad in a scarlet robe, and bespattered with applause. Two young men went home together, part of the way in silence, and one only gave expression to

the feelings of the other, when he quoted those well-known, trite, and often-quoted lines—lines full of deepest truth:—

One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid stagers and of loud huzzas.
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

This extract will give an insight into the manner of his life, and the tendency of his thought during his college career. What he felt for Wordsworth he felt for himself. Popular noise and fame were not his objects. He lived almost in seclusion. He was not extensively known at Oxford. He made but few friends; but those whom he made he clung to tenaciously, and when the circle of his intimacies was completed he did not seek to enlarge it. Few exercised much influence over him; he was rather the centre to which men converged, the magnet by which they were attracted. His acquaintance might have been extended had he joined in the manly sports of Oxford, but he was prevented from doing so by an injury which he received in his knee at an early period of his residence. The weakness so induced continued for some months, and he never mingled in the athletic exercises of the university.

He joined the Union, however, on his entrance, and spoke frequently. In these speeches he manifested no great oratorical power. They were chiefly argumentative. But the style of speaking then in vogue at the Union did not admit of any display. Mr. Davies once accompanied him to one of the debates, and his account of it is interesting:—

On one of the occasions on which I paid Robertson a short visit at Oxford, I

went with him to the Union. He was to speak that evening. The subject of debate was the moral tendency or otherwise of the Theatre. Robertson opened the discussion. I sat next to him, and he was somewhat nervous, it being about the second time that he had spoken. Before he got up to speak, pressing his hand upon my knee, he whispered in my ear, 'Davies, pray for me.' The tenor of his observations was opposed to the idea that theatrical representations could legitimately be made the channel of conveying any really good moral influence or instruction. Robertson was answered by Mr. Ruskin in a very ingenious and somewhat sarcastic speech, which excited much laughter in the room. With considerable circumlocution and innuendo he was describing a certain personage to whose influence he probably thought Robertson had, in his observations, given too much consideration, when Robertson said in my ear, 'Why! the man is describing the devil!'

It is not strange that he did not seek oratorical distinction, for it was his habit to check the dominant tendency of his mind when it led to outward brilliancy; and he felt at this time that it was necessary to subdue imagination in order to gain accuracy in argument. Neither did he make any attempt to compete for the prizes which Oxford held out for those things in which he had succeeded in Edinburgh.* Once he sent in a poem for

* 'An annual prize is given at Brazenose for the best Latin and English essays during the year. One year there were three candidates so equal in merit that the prize was divided. Of these three Mr. Robertson was one. On another occasion the tutor, the late Rev. T. Bazeley, was so pleased with some of the essays that he had four of the best read out in the Hall by their respective authors. The subject was "The Uses of Satire," and Mr. Robertson was one of the chosen number.' I am indebted for this note to the Rev. L. B. Garside, one of the successful essayists mentioned above.

the Newdigate, but it was unsuccessful. Yet beneath all this reticence, his enthusiasm, his vigour, his overflowing imagination, and exceeding vivid sense of life, flowed like a stream of fire.

It is probable that the clearness, force, and fulness of thought which marked his later eloquence, were owing to this wise self-restraint. He did not waste energy when his energy had not sufficient materials to enable him to exhaust a subject. Moreover, even at that time he dreaded the temptations of public honour and popular applause. How clearly he saw these dangers, and how sensitively he shrank from them, may be seen in a letter to his mother, written from Brazenose, on hearing of the great success of one of his friends as a preacher at Cheltenham. It reads like a presentiment of the position in which he himself was to be placed. The opinions he expresses were held by him afterwards with tenfold force at Brighton:—

Brazenose, 1839.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,—I hear of M——'s enthusiastic reception at Cheltenham. I do believe the station of a popular preacher is one of the greatest trials on earth: a man in that position does not stop to soberly calculate how much, or rather how little is done when there appears a great effect, nor to consider how immense is the difference between deeply affecting the feelings and permanently changing the heart. The preacher who causes a great sensation and excited feeling is not necessarily the one who will receive the reward of shining as the stars for ever and for ever because he has turned many to righteousness. Misery is a trial, but it makes this world undesirable, and persecution estranges a man from resting on earthly friends, and forces him to choose One whom he would never have

chosen if any other had offered; but prosperity makes earth a home, and popularity exalts self, and invites compliance to the world. It is the old story of one winter in Capua effecting a ruin for Hannibal, which neither the snow of the Alps, nor the sun of Italy, the treachery of the Gauls, nor the prowess of the Romans, could achieve.

So passed his life at Oxford, a silent, self-contained, progressive life. There are no materials for a more extended notice, and those who have loved him in life and who love him now in death must fill up the void from the few extracts from letters which follow this chapter, and from the scattered hints which will be found in the letters which he wrote from Brighton. Two of these letters, written to a young friend who was about entering college, are so valuable as his own judgment on his academical career, and so interesting as the view which his manhood took of his youth, that they are inserted here in full:—

9, Montpelier Terrace, Brighton :
June 8, 1851?

MY DEAR KENNION,—It is with some reluctance that I write to you on the subject of your studies; as, in the first place, I have no right to give an opinion; and, in the next, I quite feel the truth of what you say in your letter to your mother, that none can decide for you a question with all the bearings of which none but yourself can be acquainted. She is extremely anxious, however, that you should decide rightly, and has written to me to ask what I think. So I am sure you will not think that I am intruding advice. The chief point seems the question of reading for honours. Now I believe with you, that honours make little or nothing in practice, so far as they bear upon a man's future success. That is, the prestige of them does little in life—is forgotten, or

slightly looked upon, by the large world. But the mental habits got insensibly during the preparation for them are, I think, incapable of being replaced by anything; and this quite independently of whether a man succeeds or fails in his attempt. To my idea the chief advantage is the precluding of discursiveness. For three years or four, a man has an aim—a long-distant, definite aim. I defy any young man to create this aim for himself. 'History, with contemporary authors,' is a very vague plan, at best. But grant it well mapped out, still he has chosen his own aim, cannot be certain he has chosen well, becomes distrustful of the wisdom of the plan, because his own; will infallibly find that ripened experience will not approve the line chosen, inasmuch as being untravelling by him, he only selects it by guess. Difficulties break his ardour; he cannot struggle with a difficulty while half sceptical as to the unalterable necessity of overcoming it; and at last, having read *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, he finds that, whatever he may have got of bitter experience, one thing he has not got, and that is the steady habit of looking forward to a distant end, unalterably working on it till he has attained it—the habit, in short, of never beginning anything which is not to be finished. At college I did what you are now going to do—had no one to advise me otherwise; was rather encouraged in it by religious people, who are generally—at least, the so-called religious—the weakest of mankind; and I now feel I was utterly, mournfully, irreparably wrong. The excitement of theological controversy, questions of the day, politics, gleams and flashings of new paths of learning, led me at full speed for three years, modifying my plans perpetually. Now I would give 200*l.* a year to have read on a bad plan, chosen for me, but steadily.

3, Oriel Terrace : March 16, 1852?

MY DEAR KENNION,—It seems to me that your plan would be a good one for passing your vacation. I have no doubt

✓ whatever that French will be, on the whole, more valuable to you than German; indeed, German literature and theology, as they are at present, open out to the mind such dark vistas of doubt and Pyrrhonism, that I think you would be wise in postponing the study for some years. I am sure you are right in devoting yourself to mathematics. More than, perhaps, any other study, I believe, they form a masculine and healthy tone of mind. ✓ But I fancy that you will find no lectures in Paris on the subject—if by lectures you mean public ones. Private lessons from professors may, of course, be obtained; only it seems to me you would get these more satisfactorily through the medium of English, as part of your mathematical time would be expended in mastering the French terms.

One thing, however, I would strongly recommend, not to put yourself down in Paris, or anywhere else abroad, alone. I tried this once in Oxford, during a long vacation, thinking to have more uninterrupted time for study, and found the plan a perfect failure. The mind loses its tension for want of society, its interest in its studies, and that healthy feeling of freshness which comes from alternating study with conversation. And I do not think that it would be good for a mind like yours. The best way of learning French is to get domiciled in a respectable French family,* where there is not another Englishman. Not in one of those pensions which are common in Paris, and filled with English; but a private house, where you are forced into the expression of your ideas and wants in French, if they are to be expressed at all. If this plan should suit you, I would write to a friend in Paris who could give me information on this subject, and would afterwards give you an introduction to Mr. Lovett, the English clergyman

there, an excellent man. Pray let me know this.

At the same time this occurs to me as a piece of truth which I myself learned too late. Your object at the university is mental discipline—not merely the acquisition of knowledge. Do not aim at too much. Mathematics, classics, and theology, are your work for three or four years to come, and I would bend my energies rather upon acquiring these thoroughly than scattering my efforts over a large surface. I well know the discouragement which there is in feeling how little of all that can be known is within our grasp, and the temptation which there is to try a hundred new fields of knowledge. But the man who succeeds in life is, allowing for the proverbial exaggeration, generally the man unius libri. Life is very short; and the painter must not hope to be a good seaman; nor is the clergyman to pine because he cannot be the man of literature. I would not be anxious about German at all, but put it resolutely aside till my college career should be over. It can be acquired in after life. Hebrew, Italian, and German I learned after leaving the university, and now that I have them, I do not set much value on them. As to French, if you can conveniently spend some months in the country now, in conjunction with your pursuit of other things, I can see no reason why you should not. Only, do not be too anxious about these things. It is surprising how little they tell on the great ✓ work of life. I am at this moment preparing for a lecture, or lectures, which I am to give on poetry and the poet's character at the Philosophical Institution. It is true it is only the gathering up of ideas that have been in my mind unspoken for years; but I have sighed again and again to feel how much I have to reject as unfit for even an enlightened audience, and in a lecture expressly on the topic, and how many days and years have been spent in acquiring and pondering over thoughts that ✓ will never tell in this world, and, perhaps,

* He had himself spent some months in a French family in Paris while waiting for his commission in the army.

never will be even communicated. If I were to put what I mean in the shape of advice, derived, too, from experience, I would say this: Take care that the mind does not become too fastidious and refined. It is not a blessing, but a hindrance in the work of life. For a clergyman who has to deal with real beings of flesh and blood, I believe it perfectly possible for too much of a literary turn to mar his usefulness, at the same time that it gives him more keen sensitiveness in perceiving that it is marred. For this reason, if I were in your place, I should be anxious to give to life as much the aspect of reality as possible, which a student's life is apt to keep out of sight. I would read for honours, and sacrifice everything which interfered with this. But in the vacations I would vary this with systematic visiting of the poor, which, more than anything else, brings a man into contact with the actual and the real, and destroys fanciful dreams.

Thank you very much for your warm and kind remarks about myself. I would gladly think them true.

As a contrast to the above letters so defined in view and expression, and exhibiting a mind settled on a firm foundation of fact and thought, the following letter, full of the ferment of a young man's heart, is interesting, and especially so in the dearth of all materials out of which a clear conception of his college life can be formed. It suggests more than it says. It makes plain that he *could not* have, at the time when it was written, pursued those plans of study which his matured manhood looked back to as the wisest. It is at once touching and strange to find in it the old passion for arms developing itself in such an impractical and romantic compromise between his destiny and his desire. It shows how near had been his escape from the school of Mr. Newman,

which at first had not only allured his tastes, but had also ministered fuel to his passionate instinct for self-sacrifice. In its evangelical fervour may be seen how liable during his youth he was to strong reactions. The almost fierceness with which he speaks against the Tract School is proof *in him* of the strength of the attraction it possessed for him, just as afterwards at Brighton his attacks on Evangelicalism are proof of the strength with which he once held to that form of Christianity, and the force of the reaction with which he abandoned it for ever. Out of these two reactions—when their necessarily ultra tendencies had been mellowed down by time, emerged at last the clearness and the just balance of principles with which he taught, during 1848 and the following years, at Brighton. He had probed both schools of theological thought to their recesses, and had found them wanting. He spoke of what he knew when he protested against both. He spoke also of what he knew when he publicly recognised the Spirit of all Good moving in the lives of those whose opinions he believed to be erroneous.

Brazenose, Oxford. (1840: two or three months before he was ordained.)

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just received your letter, and take the first opportunity of answering it, as I shall be very much occupied the next few days. M. Keary's kind offer* is a very tempting one, as he is a man I should much like to learn from. But for several reasons I believe I must decline it decidedly. In the first place, if I am to be in England, I should prefer being nearer home, unless there were some very decided reasons to think so distant a place as

* Of his curacy at Hull.

Hull my appointed post. But the chief objection which rose in my mind on receiving the offer, was a feeling which I have long had, but never decidedly been called upon before to express. I am willing to look on it as in part merely a sort of romance, which must give way to any sober consideration that might be offered. But I seem this term to have in measure waked out of a long trance, partly caused by my own gross inconsistencies, and partly by the paralyzing effects of this Oxford delusion-heresy, for such it is, I feel persuaded. And to know it a man must live here, and he will see the promising and ardent men sinking one after another in a deadly torpor, wrapped up in self-contemplation, dead to their Redeemer, and useless to his Church, under the baneful breath of this accursed upas tree. I say accursed, because I believe that St. Paul would use the same language to Oxford as he did to the Galatian Church—'I would they were even cut off which trouble you;' accursed, because I believe that the curse of God will fall on it. He has denounced it on the Papal heresy, and He is no respecter of persons, to punish the name and not the reality. May He forgive me if I err, and lead me into all truth. But I do not speak as one who has been in no danger, and therefore cannot speak very quietly. It is strange into what ramifications the disbelief of external justification will extend; we *will* make it internal, whether it be by self-mortification, by works of evangelical obedience, or by the sacraments, and that just at the time when we suppose most that we are magnifying the work of our Lord. St. Paul had scarcely reached Corinth, before the Galatians whom he had left behind in a promising state, were 'entangled again with the yoke of bondage,' though they had stood in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. But this is rather a long digression, and lest the thread of connection should be broken, I must return before I have come

to the conclusion of my digression. I was going to say, that after a season of long, utter, and inexpressible darkness, caused principally by my own worldly-mindedness, and not peculiarly enlightened by an examination of the Tract opinions, I have had some weeks of peace which I had never expected to know again, and the desire once more, such as I knew when I first learned the freedom of the gospel, to live to my Master's glory. May He only grant the wish permanence! But connected with this there is a feeling of a marked path; perhaps merely fanciful, yet our desires must be surely some of the means by which God points out our sphere. When I quitted the army, it was with an inward feeling of a connection with it still unbroken, that the step which, if it had been taken at my own instance, would have been a cowardly desertion of an appointed post, was, even under the circumstances in which it did take place, too remarkable to leave me quite at liberty. Somehow or other I still seem to feel the Queen's broad arrow stamped upon me, and that the men whom in my vanity I imagined I wished to benefit in a red coat, I might now benefit with a better founded hope of usefulness, in the more sombre garb of an accredited ambassador of Christ. In short, if it were practicable, I feel a strong desire for a military chaplaincy. But, however, I am not certain that this would form a title for ordination. On this point I should much like to gain information—but if not, I should prefer a curacy in a situation which would give me an opportunity for fitting myself for this line.

I have had another battle to fight about my not going up for honours. The new tutor sent for me after an essay which I sent in, and battled with me for half an hour, being in great wrath with —, who, he said, ought to have shown more interest. And Whitaker Churton was so eloquent on the subject, that my resolution was well-nigh broken. But I am per-

suaded it is best as it is. The translation of Rom. ix. 22, is quite literal. If — will compare the parallel passage Jer. xviii. from which it seems plain that this was taken, she will see that here as there, the leading idea is God's endurance, and sovereign right of making the clay which was originally a marred vessel, a perfect one; and it would be a perversion to infer from the expressions 'fitted to destruction,' that they were so fitted by Him. At least, that is my view; but the original is quite as difficult to understand as the translation. The letters I will send the first opportunity, or bring, if I come home.

Best love to my dear little motheretta and the young ones.

It remains to notice the circumstances which marked the passing of his degree examination. He did not go up for a class; but his scholarship was so sound, and his knowledge of his subjects so accurate, that on the first day the examiners wrote to his tutor, Mr. Churton, to request that he would induce his pupil to compete for honours. By some mistake, the letter did not reach its destination soon enough, and he finished his examination in ignorance of the desire of the examiners. They then urged him to undergo a fresh examination for a class. He refused, and was given a day to resume his refusal. He again refused; but the examiners, according to the Oxford custom in such cases, put him into the fourth class.

For some time before his degree, and for a short time afterwards, he read for his ordination examination. Writing to his mother, he says:—

Brazenose: 1840.

I am now reading pretty steadily for ordination, and feel every day more and more the depths of my ignorance. I am

persuaded that the surest way for a man to be satisfied with his own attainments is to read little; for the more he reads, the more he sees the boundless extent of what there is to be known, and the circumscribed nature of his own attainments. However, perseverance and prayer may do much. I am now reading the early Church history with Golightly, which is a very great advantage, as he has a fund of general information, and is a close reader. Jones and I also read together. This plan, if not too exclusively followed, is a very useful one. The conversation which arises on the points of interest strikes, sometimes one, sometimes the other, and as you go on, tends to fix the subject more deeply on the mind, and besides gives habits of accuracy. I have had several communications (official) from the Bishop of Winchester, and all at present seems settled for me; but even now, if it be not my fate, I hope I may be prevented going there.

A letter from Mr. Churton, his tutor, to Captain Robertson, gives an account of his studies, and his subjects of thought at this time:—

My chief acquaintance with your son was in the summer of '40 or '41, being together in Oxford, and having then much personal intercourse with him: no letters passed between us, though I can even now recall many interesting conversations. We were all alone; frequently, besides our college servants, there was no one else but he and I within its walls. Many an hour, morning and evening, we paced its quadrangle, in discourse and inquiries as interesting, I believe, to myself, though many years his senior, as to him. The subjects which then came before us, besides others of a more directly religious character, were chiefly the following:—

1. The deference and amount of implicit obedience due to college authorities, even by parties already of age, but subjected to college discipline; and the presumption

that our elders are right in such and such injunctions, inasmuch as we may ordinarily assume that years and longer experience ensure greater practical wisdom.

2. The position and foundation of the Tractarian movement, as to how far such views and practices were to be found in, or were sanctioned by, the primitive and early Church; and whether the Church of the first three centuries was a safe and sufficient guide to the leaders and writers of that movement. Hereupon, we not only read together Taylor's *Ancient Christianity*, and verified and compared his passages and quotations from the Fathers, but also read several whole treatises from which his extracts were derived. Besides these points, and others involved in these, I can call to mind many interesting inquiries, critical and practical, as to various texts of Scripture, and many conversations on matters of Christian trial and temptation. I should say that the salient points and features in his character at that period were earnest diligence and eagerness towards the object and end of life; a thirsting inquiry after truth, especially moral and sacred truth; a highly active mind, metaphysical and yet practical; and a devout disposition of heart, opening not only to its own wants, but also to the wants of others. I remember in particular his expressing to me his delight in Bishop Andrewes' devotions, as opening before him a new and wide field of both intercessory supplication and individual self-abasement.

During this period he was seeking for a title; and part of a letter to his old friend, Mr. Moncrieff, fitly closes the sketch of his college career:—

Brazenose: May 26, 1840.

MY DEAR MONCRIEFF,— . . . I am glad to hear that your ministerial labours are begun. May the Lord of the harvest prosper your work, and ripen the sheaves for his floor. I cannot conceive a more exalted joy than the being permitted to see the fruit of our toil in the conversion of

the thoughtless to our dear Master. The prospect we have, as far as human eye can judge, is a stormy one, and predicts more controversy than edification. It is impossible to look round on the strange aspect of all things—the Church reeling to her centre with conflicting opinions; in all circles, whether political or religious, minds unsettled and anticipating a crisis; 'men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for those things which are coming upon the earth'—without feeling that our path will be a rugged one, and that the hour of trial is at hand. Do not you think so, even without any excess of foreboding despondency? To me every day brings increasing conviction of it, especially when I see the rapidly developed working of the Tract views, which amount to nothing less than a direct, or, as Hooker would call it, an 'indirect denial of the foundation.' Our motto must be, morning and evening, and converted into a prayer, 'Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' But how strangely that yoke steals round our necks, even when we think we are most entirely free from any idea of self-justification.

Letters from May 1838 to June 1840.

I.

Brazenose: May, 1838.

I have become quite an owl, staying at home all day, and not moving till the evening. Still I get very little done in the day, though my rapidly approaching little-go examination should make me read hard. Scarcely a word yet have I prepared for it. Not even logic, which is but just begun. Plato is the fascination, and a magnificent fellow he is—not quite so great though as the — school would make him out. I expect that we shall, in a few years, have him much more studied than he ever has been here yet—Aristotle being all in all, Sewell is giving public lectures on 'The

Republic' (which is the work I am reading), contemplating it as an anticipation of the Christian Church! He laboured very hard one day to prove that the study of Plato had always preceded, or been contemporaneous with, not only the rise of intellect, but the revival of the Christian religion: another time he said that the esoteric method of Plato was on the same principle as that which influenced the Divine mind to reveal his truths in the Bible in an unconnected form; with several other wonderful discoveries, 'Quæ,' as the Latin Gr. *poetically* says, '*nunc perscribere longum est.*' My friends tell me I am on the high road to Puseyism, loving Plato, and reading Wordsworth. Μη γένοιτο! There is something excessively chilling in the donnishness of Oxford, which insinuates its unlovely spirit everywhere—lecture, chapel, pulpit, Union, conversation, retirement—one feels inclined to say, 'Shall I ever love a human being again with anything warmer than a vegetable attachment?' It is just like the contents of my gigantic brown pitcher last winter—though within eighteen inches of the fire all day, one globe of ice. Not very elegant or classical, you will say. Well, then, Medusa's head, rockifying all that comes near it. Churton took me down, about a fortnight ago, to Ilsley, the rectory of his brother-in-law, where he did duty. The family were away, and we, with two other Oxford men, had the house to ourselves. We all agreed that the distance of eighteen miles had a marvellous effect in unpetrifying us—so much as scarcely to recognise one another. Thanks to God, there are a few spirits of a very different cast here! They must be indeed on fire with a heavenly flame to preserve the warmth they do. Two or three of my most intimate and valuable friends especially. And they will soon see their Master coming to emancipate them from this unintelligible world. If we could but all say, with heart and soul, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!'

II.

Brazenose, Oxford: May 23, 1838.

MY DEAR FATHER,— I had wished to reply more fully to your two letters for which I am in your debt, both of which, especially the last, gave me much comfort and pleasure. His ways are indeed wonderful—*how* wonderful, eternity alone can show, where we shall see the connection of what we are pleased to call trivial events, with his most stupendous schemes, and all that is dark and difficult and melancholy in this unintelligible world, all that gives our presumptuous reasoning hard thoughts of God, all that has grieved and disappointed and misanthropised, will be fully explained, and merged in one unclouded blaze of glory. The time may be much nearer than we expect. The last words of our Lord to his Church, uttered by the feeble lips of his last apostle, grey-headed, and already bending over the tomb, were—'Behold, I come quickly.' I wish we could with our whole heart and soul repeat the answer, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' But we are most of us too devotedly buried in the shadowy nothings of time and space, and too deeply attached to them, to avoid feeling, in the very spirit of unbelief, that it is a day whose postponement is to be desired, since *they* will be torn from our grasp for ever.

I am now endeavouring to read hard, since I have to take or to try to take my 'little go' this term, and as I had not a word prepared at the commencement, and have only just begun, it will be rather hard work, especially the logic, agreeable as it is. Plato too, which I am reading in lecture, together with other occupations, takes up not a little of my time.

III.

B. N. C. : October 13, 1838.

MY DEAR DAVIES,—I write in a hurry, and shall, therefore, be concise. On the coach to-day was an infidel, with whom I got into conversation. (His views were

nological in regard to Scripture, and utilitarian in regard to morals.) After much discussion, in which, thank God, I was much helped by books I have been reading lately, he introduced the subject of supernatural appearances. These, he said, could be accounted for on three grounds; but there was a fourth class which cannot be so accounted for, but this we have no right to call supernatural, as we know nothing, and future scientific discoveries might prove it to be quite in the course of nature. I knew what was coming, but determined that he should make the application himself, and begged him to be more explicit. He spoke of ghosts. I told him I had never seen one, and was not particularly interested to prove their existence. After a silence, I told him that if he would not require a Quixotic expedition on behalf of ghosts, he might have an apparent advantage; but fairly avow that he wanted to deny the fact of recorded miracles openly, as a man, we might talk over the question. He seemed ashamed, and said a few words about his not meaning exactly that. The conversation dropped till we got to Oxford, when I suddenly spoke seriously to him. He was affected, and shook hands, saying he would give the world to believe it all; that his father was a religious man, and that his dying wish had been that he should follow his steps. I asked if he had ever asked a blessing on his inquiries, for he had read much and controversially. He replied that he had, but that it had had as much effect as if he had prayed to a stone. At parting, he asked me earnestly to recommend him any book I could, and he would promise to read it.

IV.

Brazenose: November 4, 1838.

MY DEAREST BROTHER,—First, I must tell you that you would have had a letter from me in the last packet, but that a party of banditti took upon them to intercept it in its passage through Rodney House,

Cheltenham, on the plausible pretext of its being written on thick paper. After I, of all correspondents the worst, had actually summoned resolution to write and despatch a letter, it was very hard to lose the credit of it. I will try to make amends now. Your packet was sent to me yesterday—a delightful surprise. I cannot tell you how I felt as if with you in your expressions of loneliness and sorrow at our bitter parting. I felt as if I had never loved you till that moment when we saw the *Sovereign* bearing noiselessly away across the apparently boundless expanse, till she was lost to us for ever in the distance. My poor dear mother, it must be trouble for her to look to five years' separation, when one appears to me an age. Such moments remind us with irresistible eloquence that we have no abiding-place of rest here. I wish it were not a mere vain reminding, but a practical lesson, which might lead us to secure another home.

The reading your letters, which seemed fresh from your hand, recalled, with a cold feeling of sadness, the long weary miles of water which separate us, how long, God alone knows; perhaps for ever in this world. But let us both pray earnestly that the separation may not be long, and that even in this world we may renew the dearer relationship than that of earthly brotherhood. I am getting now a very delightful little circle of friends around me at Oxford, and hope soon not to number among my acquaintance one man whose society I could afford to give up. There is one in whom I have been deeply interested—a married man with a family, his wife a very superior woman. He has been reading very hard, hoping to take his degree; but, to my sorrow, failed in his examination—to him a severe trial on many accounts. I called, he was out; but I found her very much overpowered, and suffering intense anxiety for her husband's bitter disappointment. I sat some time, hoping to soothe; his tread was heard at the front door, and the whole woman was changed. I did not hear.

another sigh, and she calmly and quietly spoke on the subject, and held up a brighter view of it than she herself saw. The hour of weakness was past, and the deep strong current of a woman's affection bore her up. It was the reed rising from the storm when the oak was shattered.

This is a strain of romance almost like the expressions of boyish days, instead of my brown seared tint of three-and-twenty. Alas! how changed the spirit of our dream, our pleasant Pittville walks, only the remembrance of the happy hours we spent there with the —, etc. But joy's recollections are no longer joys; yet sorrow's memory is sorrow still. Now I wish the thousand leagues that separate us could be traversed as rapidly in body as fancy; for I should be happily with you this instant. But our only absent one is not forgotten. We do and will remember him in our prayers. God bless you, my dearest brother.

V.

July, 1839.

MY DEAR DAVIES,— . . . Thank you—most sincerely thank you—for your kind offer and invitation; but I may not accept it. I am endeavouring to make up for the reading which I have lost in the restless and unsettled state of mind of the last year and a half. I confess that every coach which passes through to Cheltenham gives me an involuntary pang—partly from remorse for mis-spent hours, partly from thoughts of the future, partly, and not least, from a wish to be at home. But it may not be; and, besides, I wish to have some solitude to calm myself to a contemplation of the rapidly approaching time, when, if ever, I must declare that I feel moved by the spirit of God to be his ambassador. To do this, with all the whirl and throbbings of an unbridled imagination and worldly feeling rife in my breast, is a thing too horrible to be thought of steadily—*μη γένοιτο!* I do not propose remaining in Oxford the whole vacation, though I believe it would be better for myself to do it. Part

of the time I intend to pass with a friend, who failed last examination for his pass. It was from deficiency in Latin writing; and it has been so strongly put before me that I might be of some service to him, that I think I shall go over there. Do not, of course, mention this, as it would seem very indelicate if he were to learn the reason which decided me. . . . I am much interested in your account of the difficulties of Miss —; but how much better they are for her spiritual life than a smooth and easy path. The Christian's aim is victory, not freedom from attack; and a soldier cannot learn to fight by pondering over maps and plans of campaigns in his barrack-room. It must be on the field of blood, and in the lonely bivouac; without real trial, how soon we find rust upon our arms, and sloth upon our souls, and the paltry difficulties of common life weigh like chains upon us, instead of being brushed away like cobwebs.

VI.

September, 1839.

MY DEAR HATCHARD,— . . . Now, then, in a very few words (for I have not really time for more), to express the immediate object of my letter. And yet it is rather hard, for a set epistle of congratulation, like one of condolence, is likely to be very stiff. However, each year as it rolls by seems to rivet with more enduring importance a day of anniversary—more especially one of an event which was the ushering into an eternity of either misery or joy a responsible creature. As boys, we have looked forward to them as the occasion of a holiday and juvenile ball. As men, we look back on them as so many waymarks on which are noted the sins and mercies of successive years. They were seasons of unmingled pleasure—now of self-reproach and melancholy retrospect, Opportunities irreparably suffered to slip by—years of self-indulgence—bad habits formed—friends alienated—others wantonly grieved—in some instances the hour of reparation and reconciliation lost for ever,

because they have gone to their long home. Two lines in the frontispiece of a little hymn-book, which I have not seen since five years old, seem branded with letters of fire on my memory :

Oh ! if she would but come again,
I think I'd vex her so no more !

United with all this, the reflection that we were not only not forwarding the eternal interests of those with whom we were, but actually blocking up for them the entrance to the already narrow path—with all this coming in a torrent on the memory, what can a birthday be to a reflecting being but a season of deep humiliation and abasement before his Creator, his Benefactor, and his Judge ? But, blessed be God, these are not his only titles, or there would be nothing for us but the blackness of darkness for ever. I trust and pray that we both may feel and know with respect to the fearful catalogue of past years that He has, as a Redeemer, 'blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.' If so, your twenty-second birthday cannot but remind you of a closer and loftier union than that which you entered on as to-morrow—a connection with dear but earthly parents ; it will tell you of a more real commencement of existence—a *παλιγγενεσία*, by which you were permitted to call God your father, Jesus Christ your brother, an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect your society, and Heaven your home. Then, as the best wish I can offer you, let me send the concluding verses of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians as a birthday prayer.

VII.

Brazenose : June 24.

MY DEAREST BROTHER,—I sit down to give an hour or two to conversation with you, although so far away ; so I shall just let my pen run on, as perhaps it will, without point or connection. It is now the long vacation, yet I am staying up here,

within the hoary walls of Brazenose, all alone, partly for the purpose of reading, partly for the sake of gaining the natural tone of mind after a time of great excitement, no less than twenty-five ladies in my room—only conceive. One day we went to Blenheim, a beautiful, but melancholy place ; for it is fast going to decay from the neglect of its ruined owner, the Duke of Marlborough. The grounds are magnificent and extensive, the house contains some of the finest pictures in England, especially a Madonna by Carlo Dolci, which alone would afford hours of enjoyment.* There is an indescribable tranquillity, with an unearthly look of rapt contemplation, in the countenance and the whole effect, which makes you feel an involuntary awe ; and it is curious to observe how the most talkative groups of visitors, one after another, were stilled into silence before it. In the evening, we went down to the river, it being the last night of the boat-races, in order to see the Brazenose boat come up in triumphal procession, as the head of the river for the year, all the others raising their oars and cheering as we passed. The next day was the commemoration. Honorary degrees were conferred upon Wordsworth and Herschel, who were immensely cheered ; then the prize essays and poems were recited. The next we all rowed down to Newnham in an eight-oar : the day lovely. Newnham, the seat of the Archbishop of York, is a beautiful place, rendered still more so by the many pic-nic parties who had gone down, like ourselves, to show the lions to their lady friends, who, with their light dresses, formed a lovely contrast to the greensward and sylvan shade. We came back by night, the plash of our oars keeping regular time to the more musical strains of the Canadian Boat-Song, and *La Dame Blanche*, with which the ladies solaced our toil. On Friday they again breakfasted with me—the vice-

* This picture is alluded to in his *Lectures on Poetry*.

principal of my college, and nine ladies. My room decorated with flowers in silver vases, before each lady an elegant bouquet; and as I was allowed the use of the college plate, the table exhibited a gorgeous display. The rest of our time was spent in seeing Oxford. But, alas! the time came for parting, and a melancholy party we were on the last morning: we had been so entirely together; every one resolved with all their hearts to please and be pleased, that we seemed like old friends, instead of which, as in several instances to myself, the brothers of the ladies were not known before. So we shook hands, spoke not a word of sorrow, and I returned to my lonely den, rendered doubly so by the

shadowy outline of bright forms and lovely faces, which so lately beamed in it, and still, to fancy, seemed to hover round. I have received the kindest invitations to spend the vacation in different places—Germany, Isle of Wight, Lancashire, London, Cumberland, Malvern, Islay, Monmouth—forcing the grateful conviction that somehow or other, if I am a friend to no one, I have many friends to me.

I've heard of hearts unkind; kind deeds
With coldness still returning.
Alas! the gratitude of man
Has oftener left me mourning.

That is the genuine, manly feeling of dear old Wordsworth.

CHAPTER II.

Passage from Collegiate to Active Life—Growth of his Christian Faith—Early Sadness of his Heart—Ordination—Curacy at Winchester—First Appearance in the Pulpit—Difficulties of his Work—Letter Recalling his Life in Winchester—Success as a Minister—Description of him by a Friend—Spiritual Life—Devotional Reading—Prayer—Preaching—Despondency arising from Illness—Examination for Priest's Orders—Close of Ministerial Life at Winchester—Continental Tour—Geneva and its Parties.

Letters from September 17, 1840, to August 3, 1841.

MR. ROBERTSON passed out of collegiate into active life, out of youth into manhood, with a grave and awful sense of responsibility. His character and Christian principles, though unannealed as yet, had been partially moulded into form, and it is necessary to trace their formation up to this point, if his after-life and more complete development are to become intelligible.

It was but slowly that his faith, always more intuitive than dependent upon 'evidences,' had become, consciously to himself, a power in his life. Various outward events and influences had assisted in developing its germ into flower and fruit. At Saxmundham, while yet a boy, he had been wonderfully preserved from a sudden

death;* and deep gratitude to God was awakened in his heart. There also one of his sisters had died, and her happiness and peace in dying had impressed him strongly. At Bury St. Edmunds, the seclusion in which he had lived had driven him in upon himself; and the form of his solitary thought had been determined by the perusal of Abbott's 'Way to do Good'—a book he valued so highly, that afterwards, at Brighton, when he felt the hardening effect of constant preaching, he read it again, as a healthy in-

* He was in a covert, walking just in front of his father. A pheasant rose. He dropped to let his father fire. The father missed the bird, and was in the act of discharging his second barrel, when, to his horror, he suddenly saw his son's head at the very muzzle of his gun!

citement to activity. At Paris, whither he went for a few months after his withdrawal from the law as a profession, his preservation from the 'gross pollution' of that city—a preservation which he calls incomprehensible—increased his faith in the personal watchfulness and love of God. At Cheltenham, he imputes to the preaching of Mr. Boyd and Mr. Close, and to the society of many Christian friends, the fervour as well as the sober resolution for the service of Christ with which he began his college career.

Consistently and actively among the temptations of Oxford, he had lived a Christian life, and grown in Christian experience, and now his realisation of Christ as his Saviour and his personal Friend was as deep and vivid as the love and labour which grew out of it into ministerial fruitfulness. This was the cumulative result of many years of prayer and struggle.

To this resting-place God brought him not only through the means of external influences, and of his own thirst after righteousness, but also through the natural drift of his character. In boyhood and youth, his religion, before it had consciously taken a distinctively Christian form, manifested itself in two ways—as hatred and resistance of evil, and as a reverence and effort for purity. He wrote in after years, and it was true of his whole life—

There is something of combateness in me which prevents the whole vigour being drawn out, except when I have an antagonist to deal with, a falsehood to quell, or a wrong to avenge. Never till then does my mind feel quite alive. Could I have chosen my own period of the world to have lived in, and my own type of life, it should

be the feudal ages, and the life of a Cid, the redresser of wrongs.

This side of his religion, the old religion of chivalry, made him at school the defender of the oppressed, the bold denouncer of all that was untrue, and the champion of justice among his fellows. There was mingled with this, during his youth, that slight tinge of noble superstition which made at once the strength and the weakness of ancient religious chivalry. In a letter written from Brighton, he relates and comments on an instance of this.

I remember when a very, very young boy, going out shooting with my father, and praying, as often as the dogs came to a point, that he might kill the bird. As he did not always do this, and as sometimes there would occur false points, my heart got bewildered. I believe I began to doubt sometimes the efficacy of prayer, sometimes the lawfulness of field sports. Once, too, I recollect when I was taken up with nine other boys at school to be unjustly punished, I prayed to escape the shame. The master, previously to flogging all the others, said to me, to the great bewilderment of the whole school—'Little boy, I excuse you; I have particular reasons for it,' and, in fact, I was never flogged during the three years I was at that school. That incident settled my mind for a long time; only I doubt whether it did me any good, for prayer became a charm. I fancied myself the favourite of the Invisible. I knew that I carried about a talisman unknown to others which would save me from all harm. It did not make me better; it simply gave me security, as the Jew felt safe in being the descendant of Abraham, or went into battle under the protection of the Ark, sinning no less all the time.

The other side of his boyish religion—the adoration of purity—he symbolised for himself in Womanhood. Under this symbol he worshipped,

with a boy's unquestioning worship, his Ideal. Like a boy, too, he transferred to the form all the excellence of the Idea. Recalling afterwards these early days of chivalrous imagination and romance, he writes in one of his letters :—

The beings that floated before me, robed in vestures more delicate than mine, were beings of another order. The thought of one of them becoming mine was not rapture but pain. . . . At seven years old, woman was a sacred dream, of which I would not talk. Marriage was degradation. I remember being quite angry on hearing it said of a lovely Swede—the loveliest being I ever saw—that she was likely to get married in England. She gave me her hair, lines, books, and I worshipped her only as I should have done a living rainbow, with no further feeling. Yet I was then eighteen, and she was to me for years nothing more than a calm, clear, untroubled fiord of beauty, glassing heaven, deep, deep below, so deep that I never dreamed of an attempt to reach the heaven. So I lived. I may truly say that my heart was like the Rhone as it leaves the Lake of Geneva.

As he grew up he surrounded his conception of womanhood with all the sacredness of his highest religious aspirations, while his reverence for this conception tended in itself to exalt his desire for holiness of life, and to keep him true to his ideal. In one of his lectures at Brighton, he says—

It is feelings such as these, call them romantic, if you will, which I know, from personal experience, can keep a man all his youth through, before a higher faith has been called into being, from every species of vicious and low indulgence in every shape and every form.

And this youthful chastity of spirit was never stained in life. It is impossible not to feel that to this he owed his

keen insight into moral truth; the lucid power with which he solved spiritual problems and points in the casuistry of the heart; that clear analysis of apparently conflicting truths, which men said came upon them like a revelation, and the bright and tender sympathy and penetration with which he recognised the good, and by which he recoiled from the evil, of the men he met. And now, at his entrance into manhood, both these ideas, which formed, as it were, his natural religion, became, and continued always to be, the foundations of his spiritual religion. He found them realised for him in Christ the perfect Man. His writings teem with glowing descriptions of Christ as the great Vindicator of all wrong; of Christ in his contest with the spirit of the world, of oppression, of hypocrisy. To Christ also, as the spotless Purity, he transferred his young belief in the entire stainlessness of womanhood. He saw in Him not only perfect manhood, but perfect womanhood. One of his ablest sermons, on the Glory of the Virgin Mother,* is devoted to the elaboration of this thought.

The prevailing tone of his mind on entering the ministry was a tone of sadness. (This was due partly to his imagination—an imagination so creative that it gave form and colour to every thought, to everything he saw and read, and which, when permitted to roam unchecked, wandered on for hours, thought suggested thought, and feeling feeling, till a whole wild landscape of ideas and their forms grew up before his eyes.) He could not live in so ideal a world in which he became vividly conscious of a fuller life

* Vol. ii., Sermons.

of genius than he could embody, without becoming at times the victim of a vague sadness, the vagueness of which was its greatest pain.

Add to this an extremely sensitive organization, and it is no wonder that both feeling and thought, in this continual battle between his nature and his will, were, when he was far too young, preternaturally excited, and that he rapidly lost the vigorous health and strength of his boyhood. His spirit consumed his body.

Such an organization increased, if it did not half create, a religious sadness—the sadness of one whose spiritual ideal was always infinitely beyond his practice. He never was content; he never thought that he had attained, rather that he was lagging far behind in Christian life. Everywhere this is reflected in his letters. His feeling of it was so strong, that it seemed rather to belong to a woman than to a man; and at certain times the resulting depression was so great, that he fell into a morbid hopelessness.

In addition to these sadnesses, he had some real grounds for melancholy. Events had occurred during his college career which had shaken him terribly. He speaks in one of his later letters of a shock received in youth, from which he never altogether recovered; but which, as it was the first, carved its story most deeply into his heart. And yet all his characteristic sadness was balanced by the fulness of life and appreciation of the beautiful which afterwards more fully distinguished him. The result of this was often, joyousness of spirit, and elasticity of heart which enabled him to rebound from sorrow, a power of realising all the happy points of existence, and a delight in all that was fresh and

pure in humanity and nature, so keen, so delicate, and so self-forgetful, that, till the terrible pain of the disease which killed him began to torture him day and night, he never lost youthfulness of heart. 'The woof of life is dark,' he says, 'but it is shot with a warp of gold.'

With this character he went up for ordination, and in the very fact of his ordination is partly, also, to be found the cause of the sorrowful sternness with which he began his ministerial work: for it was the final and irrevocable seal set to his self-devoted sacrifice of the profession of the army to that of the Church.

On Sunday, July 12, 1840, he was ordained by the Bishop of Winchester, who, on presenting his papers to him, gave him as his motto the text from which Mr. Nicholson, his future rector, had preached the ordination sermon, 'Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.' He had himself chosen as his text for the short sermon which the candidates write, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' 'It was chosen,' he says, 'as peculiarly characteristic of a minister's distinctive mission.' The motto of the Bishop and his own choice of a text, were certainly characteristic of the frame of mind in which he commenced his duties. The enthusiasm which he felt bordered on the stern devotion of Loyola, and had, like his, a soldier's spirit at its root. The trumpet-sound of that selected verse may, perhaps, have stirred his heart with an association of the *ré-veille* he had so often heard as a boy. It is necessary to say once more, because it is one of the key-notes of his character, that all his life long he was

a soldier at heart. Again and again he expresses his conviction that, in a military life, the highest self-sacrifice he was capable of could alone have been accomplished. Those who have heard him speak of battle—battle not as an incident of mere war, but as the realisation of death for a noble cause—will remember how his lips quivered, and his eyes flashed, and his voice trembled with restrained emotion. Unconsciously to himself, the ring of his words, the choice of his expressions, his action even in common circumstances, his view of the Universe and of Humanity, were influenced and coloured by the ideal he had formed of a soldier's life, by the passionate longing of his youth to enter it, and by the bitterness of the regret with which he surrendered it.

It must not be thought, however, that that bitterness diminished in the least his Christian devotion or his eagerness in Christian work. It was, on the contrary, transmuted into energy for Christ. The strength of character which made him feel so keenly the surrender of one profession, made him adopt another with fervour. He transferred the same spirit of sacrifice with which he would have died for men in battle, to a more hidden and a diviner warfare. His feeling of the solemnity of his duty was profound. One who knew him well says :—

He took on himself the office of a minister with the keenest sense of responsibility and the most perfect devotion of will. He desired to emulate the spirit of St. Paul. I was not present when he was ordained, but I heard from those who were, that his agitation was overpowering. When I saw him, the day after, he looked as if he had been through an illness. He seemed quite shattered.

He had been given a title by Mr. Nicholson, rector of the united parishes of St. Maurice, St. Mary Kalendar, and St. Peter Colebrook, Winchester. These parishes had been unfortunate. The predecessor of Mr. Nicholson had been suspended for drunkenness. There were not a hundred people who attended the church. But with Mr. Nicholson's arrival, a new spirit came into the place, and the parish church had been enlarged and rebuilt when Mr. Robertson, July 19th, 1840, entered on his ministerial duties. The impression which his earnestness made is detailed in the following letter from one who was then a teacher in the Sunday school :—

I met Mr. Robertson for the first time on the morning of July 19, 1840, in the Sunday school. His bearing on this occasion made such an impression on my mind, that I shall ever vividly remember it. In place of the stiffness and timidity usually observable in the first ministrations of a young clergyman, he fell into his place with the ease and freedom of one who has worn his armour long. I recollect that after Mr. Nicholson had formally introduced him to all the teachers as fellow-labourers, he seated himself on the stool by my side, and after some remarks to myself on the different systems of education, in the course of which he expressed his deep sense of the value of Sunday schools, he leaned forward and addressed my class (about a dozen big, rough boys), urging them, in his own peculiar strain of loving earnestness, to live as Christians, concluding with these words : ' Believe me, there is nothing else worth living for, is there, Mr. —?' turning to me for confirmation. This was his first address as a minister, and his matter and manner were both equally remarkable.

He preached his first sermon in the evening, on the text, ' Ho, every one that

thirsteth, come ye to the waters,' &c., Isa. lv. 1. He was at once perfectly at home in the pulpit. His sermon, a fervid echo of the prophet's invitation, was not merely read, but *preached* with an eloquence, confidence of power, and self-possession I have never witnessed in any similar instance. On the following Sunday he preached on, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,' &c.; and his confidence as a preacher had so increased, that he used considerable action. On the third Sunday he preached on, 'And he brought him to Jesus.' In this sermon he repeated several times as the burden of his discourse, 'he brought his brother to Jesus.' The selection of these three texts for his first sermons will afford some clue to the prevailing tone of his mind at that time. They were made the occasions for a full and forcible declaration of Evangelical views, though unusually free from the peculiar phraseology of the school which has been so named.

It was not, however, all smooth sailing. There were still, among a very poor population of from three to four thousand, much infidelity and immorality—the children of a long neglect. Violent opposition was made to the building of a new church, and still more violent to the establishment of parochial schools, not only by a number of small shopkeepers, who were bitterly prejudiced and ignorant, but also by the old High Church gentry of the parish, who looked upon schools as dangerous innovations.

Among such rough elements did the young minister begin his work. (The difficulties of his position were his stimulus.) He laboured with all his heart; and especially among the poor and working men, was so earnest, so courteous, so eager to serve, that in a great measure he overcame their prejudices. He was self-devoted, but

repelled the praise which named him so.

I would rather be doing my little nothing (he writes to Mr. Davies) in Christ's vineyard, than enjoying the wealth or honour of the country. It is a weary wandering this, but it is a great comfort it will not last long, and there will be an end of battling with a sinful heart, when the resurrection of the Lord is perfected in the resurrection of His members. I have been reading lately 'Brainerd's Life,' which, to my taste, stands alone as a specimen of biography. 'To believe, to suffer, and to love,' was his motto, like that of the early Christians; but with us, if a minister gives himself a little exertion, a hundred voices flatter him with an anxiety for his life, as if a fireside, plentiful table, and warm clothing were compatible with the idea of suicide. Brainerd did spend himself in his Master's service, and his *was* self-denial—and a self-denial which there was none to witness or admire.

(He seems thus from the beginning to have felt the depression arising from the unthankful nature and severity of his work; but he found in his rector a faithful friend, whose sympathy cheered and whose experience guided him. The following letter, written to Mrs. Nicholson on hearing of her husband's death, recalls the writer's life at Winchester:—

Cheltenham: May 26, 1844?

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I do not hesitate for one moment whether I ought to intrude upon your sadness or not, for we are mourners together. In your most affectionate husband I have lost a friend, and it is my sad privilege to write to you in your bereavement. I was startled and solemnized by hearing who had been taken from us—for I never dreamed that I should be his survivor—and all our happy Sunday evenings, and country walks, and ministerial union, came rushing over my recollection.

Oh, what days those were—and what kindness did you both show to me, as a brother and sister and more! After a moment of bitterness, almost the very first thought that rose on my heart was, his work is done, and done well; and I felt roused and invigorated, instead of depressed, by the remembrance that we have a work to do, and the night cometh when no man can work. I cannot look back to all the past without feeling that his memory is a soothing thing to us all, and almost longing that our own course was as fairly run, and all as safe and secure as it is with him. I preached immediately after I heard the news on 1 John ii 15, 16, 17, and there was not a little reality and earnestness imparted to what I said from recollecting how powerfully that lesson had just been impressed upon my heart, ‘The world passeth away and the lust thereof;’ but the next words forced on my mind the feeling that nothing now can quench his immortality. Work done—that lasts, and nothing else, through the wreck of hopes, and the dissolving of this strange universe—‘he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.’

What soothing, ennobling recollections yours will be when the first stunning sensation is over! We want such recollections to nerve and brace us for our work. Struggling, battling, conquering, and those that have passed into eternity looking on—the cloud of witnesses. I too have just lost a dear one, and we weep together; but one feeling must be uppermost with us both, that we have deliberately chosen the Cross for our portion, and it is no marvel if some of its blood is sprinkled on us. The Cross is dear, come how and where it will.

And now, my dear Mrs. Nicholson, will you ever come and spend some time with us, and try the kindest welcome of one who revered and loved your departed husband? It will be a joy to us if you will; I do not mean just now, for your wound is perhaps too fresh for that; but whenever you will. Pray let us hear from you as soon as you can write without pain.

The friendship which this letter proves, supplied him with the external sympathy he needed to meet the difficulties of his work. His success in conjunction with Mr. Nicholson was as great as he could expect.

We have just had (he writes in November 1840) to open two churches at once, instead of one, in which my rector and myself exchange duties, and they are both crowded, literally to overflowing. We have a lecture in the week, and two adult classes for men and women, the attendance at which increases weekly, and our communicants have been doubled in the last three months. So that amidst much dislike and disgust from the old High Church gentry of the town, many of the common people hear us gladly, and some of the upper classes are beginning to manifest curiosity and interest. My rector is everything I could wish, as a guide and as a friend. His kindness and that of his wife are unbounded. . . . Both he and I are occupied at once to the utmost, and cannot spare a day away from the parish.

He devoted much of his time to the Sunday schools, and made the teaching systematic and useful by training the teachers himself. He supplied them with questions on the Epistle for the day, the answers to which they were to work out for themselves. He then went over the results with them during the week. In this way he preserved their power of individual thought—a point on which all through his life he laid the greatest stress. In October, 1840, he wrote to a friend as if he were well satisfied with his work:—

With regard to my own work, I trust it is not entirely unblest, though it might well deserve to be so. We have much in this parish to encourage, and I believe the only discouragement is the sloth of my own heart, which too often produces despondency. Still every day convinces me more

and more that there is one thing, and but one, on earth worth living for—and that is to do God's work, and gradually grow in conformity to His image by mortification, and self-denial, and prayer. When that is accomplished, the sooner we leave this scene of weary struggle the better, so far as we are ourselves concerned. Till then, welcome battle, conflict, victory!

As a picture of his general way of life, the following extract from a letter from one of his Winchester friends is interesting :—

When I first knew Mr. Robertson, he was certainly both in appearance and manner the most refined and gentlemanlike young man I had ever seen. His smile and address were winning. He was quite free from any of the *gaucherie* and effeminacy which now and then characterise men of letters. Enthusiastic, and aspiring after impossible perfection, he was grave generally, and a vein of melancholy ran through his character. He could scarcely derive pleasure enough at this time from small and common things. Small pleasures were scarcely pleasures to him. Not much society was offered to him, and he did not wish for it. He was rather too much disposed to regard general society as a waste of time.

His powers of conversation were most remarkable, and so were his acquirements. He was no contemptible scholar, and of general information he had a large store. His knowledge of French and Italian literature were far beyond the common. His power of quotation, especially of poetry, was remarkable. During the first months of his clerical life he was a close student in the mornings, getting up early, and eating almost no breakfast, in order to be able to apply himself to his work. He chiefly at that time devoted himself to the study of Hebrew and biblical criticism, though he read all kinds of books. His retentive memory made him a sort of *synopsis criticorum* in his own person. He

seemed to know what had been written by most of the great authorities on all difficult texts. His views were entirely 'evangelical,' but even then puzzles suggested themselves. He was always trying to discover wherein lay the difference between 'a saving faith' and a merely historical belief in Christ as the Saviour.

His way of life was most regular and simple. Study all the morning; in the afternoon, hard fagging at visitation of the poor, in the closest and dirtiest streets of Winchester; his evenings were spent sometimes alone, but very often with his rector.

Such was his outward life; but the history, so far as it can be gathered from his papers, of his spiritual life remains to be told. He had entered, as we have seen, upon his ministry partly in sadness and partly under the influence of an ascetic enthusiasm. But he soon met with temptations and hindrances to a severe Christian life which arose from his peculiar temperament. At Winchester he endeavoured to overcome these temptations by austerities. He restricted himself to all but necessary expenses, and spent the rest of his income on the poor. He created a system of restraint in food and sleep. For nearly a year he almost altogether refrained from meat. He compelled himself to rise early. Thus he passed through the domain of the Law, before he entered on the freer region of the Gospel. His motto always was, 'If any man will follow me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily.' But at Winchester self-denial was partially expressed in self-imposed and outward observances; at Brighton, it was the spontaneous and natural expression of his whole inward life.

He refrained also from much society. In some papers which he wrote long

afterwards, he speaks of this with approbation.

I am conscious (he says) of having developed my mind and character more truly, and with more fidelity, at Winchester than anywhere. Looking back, I think I perceive reasons for this. First I went out little, and hence perfected what I undertook before fresh impulses started up to destroy the novelty and interest of the impulse already set in motion. For example, I read Edwards completely and mastered him. The impulse came to its limit, unexhausted.

It will be seen, by contrasting this with his letters, how clearly he saw the mistake he had made by desultoriness at college, and with what determination he corrected a fault.

He found, he said, devotional reading of great use to him. He read slowly 'The Imitation of Christ;' but, when he could, he chose, as his books of devotion, the lives of 'eminently holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and high-mindedness, but communion with God besides.' It made his sense of the reality of religious feeling more acute when he found it embodied in the actions of the men who expressed it. He read daily the lives of Martyn and Brainerd. These books supplied a want in his mind, and gave him impulse. 'I recollect,' he writes at Brighton, 'how much more peaceful my mind used to be when I was in the regular habit of reading daily, with scrupulous adherence to a plan, books of a devotional description.'⁹

Prayer was his constant resource. In his hours of gloom he would often retire and pray alone till he realised God's presence.

It seems to me now (he writes, in 1841),

* See Letter LXXII. for the whole subject.

that I can always see, in uncertainty, the leading of God's hand, after prayer, when everything seems to be made clear and plain before the eyes. In two or three instances I have had evidence of this which I cannot for a moment doubt. You can have little idea of the temptations in the ministry to despond and let the hands hang down; and the many hours of doubt and difficulty which come upon the soul. And if to these were added the uncertainty, whether the position itself were one in which we had placed ourselves without God's direction, they would be indeed intolerable.

He invariably felt the necessity of forms to support spiritual life, and that all the more, perhaps, from his natural aversion to them. Prayer, always customary with him, had become the habit of his life at Oxford.† He systematised prayer at Winchester. He set apart certain subjects for each day in the week. 'Sunday: Parish; outpouring of the Spirit. Monday: Act of devotion. Tuesday: Spread of the Gospel. Wednesday: Kingdom of Christ. Thursday: Self-denial. Fri-

† The following prayer was written at Oxford and used at Winchester. It proves the sternness of his opposition to the school of Mr. Newman:—

'The enemy has come in like a flood. We look for Thy promise. Do Thou lift up a standard against him. O Lord, here in Oxford we believe that he is poisoning the streams which are to water Thy Church at their source. Pardon us if we err. Oh, lead us into all truth. But, O our God, if we are not mistaken, if the light which is in us is darkness—how great is that darkness! Lighten our darkness in this university with the pure and glorious light of the Gospel of Christ. Help, Lord, for the faithful are diminished from among the children of men. My Father, I am like a child, blown about by every wind of doctrine. How long shall I walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet myself in vain? Let not my inconsistent, selfish conduct be a pretext for blasphemy against Thy saints and persisting in heresy. Hear me, my Lord and Master.'

But as his ministerial experience grew, he

day: Special confession. Saturday. Intercession.'

The prayer in which all these centred, the one prayer of his whole life, was, that he might have an 'objective, disinterested love of Christ,' and that he might have 'that possession of God which arises from love for others.'

Bring into captivity (he prays) every thought to the obedience of Christ. Take what I cannot give: my heart, body, thoughts, time, abilities, money, health, strength, nights, days, youth, age, and spend them in Thy service, O my crucified Master, Redeemer, God. Oh, let not these be mere words! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My heart is athirst for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

The preaching which resulted from this prayerful spirit was imbued by it. Speaking of sermon-writing, he says:—

The most valuable book I possess is a remembrance of trials at which I repined, but which I now find were sent in answer to my prayer to be made a minister. *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio.* And those sermons in which these have had much share, I have found tell most; and I trust that God will bring in his flock by such a thing as I. I am sure if He does, it will be strength made perfect in weakness indeed.

Those who are acquainted with his later career will feel astonished at the began to think less of 'heresy,' Tractarian or otherwise, and to see that it was redemption from sin, and not so much from untrue opinions, which the world required. He writes from Winchester—'I have too much of stern iniquity and hell rampant to grapple with, to give much time to reading or Church questions; indeed, even the Tractarian heresy has vanished from my mind amid the sterner conflict with worldly passions and open atheism; for we have some of these madmen here.'

contrast it presents to this period. The austerities, the seclusion from society, even the reading of that class of devotional books which rather tend to weaken than to strengthen character, were all put aside at Brighton. (The sermons preached in that town speak continually of the unprofitableness of asceticism, of the necessity of living, as Christ did, among men in the world, and of the dangerous tendency of mere devotional reading.) It is plain that if he had lived more naturally at Winchester, he would not only have retained his health, but also given a manlier vigour to his intellect. But trained in a very restricted school of thought and religion which was dominant thirty years ago, he could not emerge from it without first going down into its depths. It seems to have weakened everything that he wrote. His letters of this time are scarcely worth reading. His thoughts are not marked by any individuality. The only thing which did not suffer was his work. The desire to die, partly suggested by ill-health, seemed to him to be a spiritual desire. The sensitiveness of his conscience unduly exaggerated every failure into a sin. He fell into a habit of unwise self-dissection. It is painful to read his diary in which all his inward life is mapped out into divisions, his sins and errors labelled, selfishness discovered in all his efforts and resolves, and lists made out of the graces and gifts which he needed especially. It is impossible not to feel, when he got rid of all this, and felt its fruitlessness and its antagonism to the true spirit of the Life of Christ, how he sprang from a dwarf into a giant.

And yet all this self-torture and self-inquiry gave him, to a certain degree,

an insight into the hearts of men, though, generally speaking, only into the evil of their hearts. He gained a great command over the feelings of those who felt themselves oppressed with the same weight of sin and struggle. His sermons touched such men to the quick. They were delivered with great ease and self-command. His beautiful voice, his dignified yet vivid action, and the impassioned earnestness of his manner, made every word tell. In themselves, the sermons preached at Winchester do not exhibit much power. Contrasted with those delivered at Brighton, they are startlingly inferior. They do not, to the *reader*, even foretell his future excellence. They are overloaded with analyses of doctrine. They are weakened by the conventionalities of University theology. They are, however, full of forcible appeals to the consciences of men, and of deeply-felt descriptions of the love of God in Christ.

They contain all the characteristic doctrines against which he afterwards so deliberately protested at Brighton. They contain also many passages which are in reality records of his own spiritual struggles; for in preaching he could not argue abstractedly. He saw things by the light of his own heart, and he preached unconsciously his own pain and his own effort.

I think (writes one of his friends, who *heard* him preach every Sunday at Winchester), that his sermons *did* prophesy of his future excellence. I am disposed to say that they were never at any time more impressive. He then wrote them throughout with great rapidity, always on Saturday, the time between breakfast and one o'clock sufficing for a sermon. He did not use much action, but there was a restrained

passion in him which forced people to listen. Though there was much thought in all that he said, yet in those days he had, so to speak, scarcely begun to think, and of course had come to no conclusions. He had not then thrown off his leading strings.

This friend of his continues:—

About one year of simple life and hard work, during which I think he was really happy, passed. A personal trial then befell him, which he felt very bitterly, and which affected his health and spirits. He thought himself attacked by the malady which had carried off so many of his family, and therefore would have no medical advice, and use no remedies. He imagined that if he once told his feelings, he would be laid aside at once, and he was determined to preach as long as he could stand. This he literally did, and never were his words more telling. He did preach as one who thought himself dying, to dying men. He did not then care to live long, and had a sentimental pleasure in the thought of an early death. He afterwards said so, adding that he did not then know how much God had for him to learn before he should be fit to die.

The following letters mark the gradual rise of these feelings:—

March, 1841.

My work does not prosper as you anticipate—at least it appears at a standstill, and my own energy and heart for the work seem gone for the present. It will not, I trust, be always so; but after a time I shall be braced up to renewed exertions.

. . . . There is much to be learned which cannot be obtained alone—to say nothing of the responsibility of having so many souls intrusted to the charge of a young beginner. Oh, it is a heavy, heavy, weight! I begin to think and tremble as I never did before; and I *cannot* live to Christ. My heart is detached indeed from earth, but it is not given to Him. All I

do is a cross and not a pleasure—a continual struggle against the current : and all I effect is to prevent being hurried back as rapidly as I might be—but I make no way. I know I shall soon have some heavy blow to start me from my lethargy. Even so, come, Lord Jesus !

May the Holy Spirit warm you to greater self-denial, and holiness, and love, and devotedness than I can feel or imagine.

Winchester : April, 1841.

I trust, my dear J., you will be taught unceasing diligence. If you could but feel those words, 'the night cometh when no man can work,' as you will feel them when it comes, there would be an end of trifling in you, and me, and all of us, for ever. Things now of apparent importance shrink up into nothing in sight of that hour. And there is a work to be done for Christ : how little time to do it in ! Surely there is nothing here worth living for, but to be conformed to Him in deed, and word, and thought, and to die really to the world.

Winchester : May 31, 1841.

My ever kind and considerate rector is pressing me much to go home for relaxation, which in all probability I shall do soon. Indeed, I believe I must ; for, almost immediately after seeing you at Oxford, I became very unwell, and whatever it may be, it seems to increase instead of diminishing in unfavourable appearance. Periods every now and then of extreme lassitude come on, together with cough and pain in the side. Of course this may be nothing at all ; but I write to you in confidence of friendship, that I begin to suspect my life will not be a long one. Not that I think there is any immediate danger, but a very few years would seem to be the utmost limit. I fear I am too earnestly longing to depart ; perhaps this has partly contributed to make me form this opinion of myself, and there is a great difference between a desire to be with Christ, and a mere wish to be released from the weariness of the flesh. Which of

these two is my feeling, only God knows. Do not mention what I told you, as it is merely my own surmise. . . . My dear sister is very ill, though my family seem lately to have become sanguine as to her ultimate recovery. Oh ! if we could only learn that hard lesson, 'Thy will be done !' To say this in every dispensation, be it what it may, is the whole of religion ; for what have we to do but to have our wills entirely merged in that of our Father? and when this is done, we are ripe for the garner.

The medical advice which he at first refused, he was induced at last to seek.

Winchester : June 17, 1841.

I have been for the last week under medical care in town, for cough and pain in the side, and other unpleasant symptoms, arising from inflammation of the mucous membrane of the lungs and bronchial tubes. I am thankful to say that further mischief is arrested for the present ; but the medical men insist on my giving up duty for some time. I concealed this from my family as long as it was uncertain, as I told you in confidence ; of course it is a secret no longer, especially as it is not so bad as I expected.

Again, on July 5, 1841, he writes :

I have been strongly advised to try a change of scene and air in Switzerland, and I think it will probably end in my following this counsel, though I feel much indisposed towards it. But I must make some effort to escape from this lethargy of body and apathy of mind, and perhaps this will be the only means I can devise. With this exception, I do not think there is now very much the matter with me, only I cannot fix my mind, or interest myself in one single thing on earth. I know it is a morbid state which must be overcome by vigorous effort, but the difficulty is to make it.

Before his departure for the Conti-

ment, he passed the examination for priest's orders. He writes from Farnham to Mr. Nicholson :—

Mrs. — has very kindly offered me letters of introduction to Geneva, which will considerably contribute to fix my plans of travel, as I shall proceed there at once, with only a delay of a few days at remarkable spots on the Rhine, and then make small excursions from Geneva as my headquarters. I find a strange contrast in the views of this July and those of last—when all seemed a bright field of conquest before the eyes, and there had been no experience of the painful truth that the professional opposition to others' sin does not release a minister from the struggle with his own. This time, I have had little but shame to feel, bitter shame, and God alone can judge how inadequate to the cause. All this I do not hesitate to say to you, though to others it would be egotistical and indelicate; but I have just been giving vent on paper to the thoughts which rose uppermost, without much considering either order or connection. To-morrow I am to be irrevocably in outward ritual set apart to the work of God. I would that it were as easy to be separated for ever from the earthliness within.*

With this mournful retrospect and sense of failure closed his ministerial life at Winchester. His young experience had passed out of enthusiasm into despondency. Looking back, three months afterwards, from the death-bed of his sister upon that time, he says :—'She is fast wearing away, and her short career will soon be at an end.

* It was the custom of the Bishop of Winchester to ask the candidates for priest's orders to write an account of their diaconate. The account given by Mr. Robertson seemed to the Bishop so valuable for its suggestions, teaching, and experience, that he retained it, and frequently gave it to future candidates to read, as a noble expression of the spirit and mode in which a diaconate should be fulfilled.

Three months ago, how I should have envied her calm decay, and longed to share her quiet shroud, and her departure to be with Christ.'

But this sadness was soon remedied by change of scene and the excitement of healthy exercise.

He travelled on foot through the Continent. He entered at once, and fully, into continental life, and manners, and politics. He endeavoured to see all sides of foreign questions, by conversing with men of all classes.

Nor did he shrink from speaking of religion as it ever presented itself to him as a life in Christ. Few would have dared to have spoken to men as he did on spiritual subjects; few could have so succeeded if they had dared. Even Englishmen do not seem to have been offended. Such was his earnestness and his delicate courtesy, that no one ever drew back in injured dignity. Men were rather induced to open their hearts to him. He had a way of half-revealing himself—of giving freely all he could give of himself, while the sacred depths of feeling were undisclosed, which insensibly lured men to unfold themselves in turn. The whole was done unconsciously. He neither knowingly gave nor withheld. He was carried away to say what he did say by the impression which the person he conversed with made upon him. His instinct told him where to stop. Hence arose the wonderful reality of his words, the strange, entire absence of self-consciousness which gave such a personality to all he said, and such an impalpable force to every action and impression. Old men consulted him; strangers disclosed to him the difficulties of their spiritual and worldly life.

On the other hand, when he met

men who despised Christianity, or who, like the Roman Catholics, held to doctrines which he believed untrue, this very enthusiasm and unconscious excitement swept him sometimes beyond himself. He could not moderate his indignation down to the cool level of ordinary life. Hence he was wanting at this time in the wise tolerance which formed so conspicuous a feature of his maturer manhood. He held to his own views with pertinacity. He believed them to be true, and he almost refused to allow the possibility of the views of others having truth in them also. He was more or less one-sided at this period. With the Roman Catholic religion it was war to the death, not in his later mode of warfare, by showing the truth which lay beneath the error, but by denouncing the error. He seems invariably, with the pugnacity of a young man, to have attacked the Roman Catholic faith; and the mode in which this was done was startlingly different from that which afterwards he adopted.

With the Neologianism of Germany—to make use of his own term—he also came into contact.

I travelled several days with a young Prussian of Elberfeld. He gave a dreadful picture of Krummacher both as to his life and doctrine, evidently coloured by extreme hatred to religion. Indeed, the account was its own refutation. It was one of the many proofs that we daily meet with, that they who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. He was well informed in English and German history, much inclined to ridicule Scripture and holy things. At last it came to a discussion. He mentioned, as usual, some difficulties in Scripture; and, after a long argument, I told him our hopes, our belief, and our conviction. Direct assertion did partially what discussion had failed to do.

He ceased bantering, and after a few minutes' silence, said gravely, '*C'est une belle croyance*—I would that I could believe it too.' Poor fellow! he was afterwards reinforced by two Swiss of Geneva—one an avowed infidel, the other a blasphemous Socinian. He was unbounded in his mockery of Malan, Merle, etc., whom he called madmen. 'Momiers' is the general popular appellation applied to them. 'They are a new fashioned set,' he said, 'who are tired of old people. They have deserted the old ——' (he meant God the Father), 'and will have nothing to do with any one but His Son.' He walked off on being reminded that the 'new fashioned set' was not these men, but those who had deserted the doctrines of Calvin. So I was left to the fearful libertinism of the infidel, backed, I fear, by the approval, but now silent approval, of my Prussian acquaintance. We parted, I fear, without any good done. I hope to get from Merle or Malan some account of the church here, to-day, or, at least, soon.

From the Rhine, he passed into Switzerland, through the Jura. He had introductions at Geneva, where he continued to stay for some time. He plunged at once and eagerly into the various church and religious questions which then agitated the city. The vigour, the life, the bright enthusiasm which he brought to bear on all subjects, delighted and astonished the circle in which he moved. Friends sprang up around his path. It seemed as if he had become a Genevese, so close was his interest and his sympathy with the despised Christians of Geneva; and the impetuosity and determination of his mode of argument are both characteristic of him at this period.

The following letters and extracts of letters written from Winchester and the Continent, are inserted as con-

taining in themselves a history of his thought, and feelings, and opinions. One especially, dated Aug. 3, Hôtel de la Couronne, is remarkable for a positive statement of his doctrinal views during the second year of his ministry, and also for the prophecy of Malan, so sternly fulfilled afterwards—'Mon très-cher frère, vous aurez une triste vie, et un triste ministère.'

Letters from September 17, 1840, to August 3, 1841.

VIII.

September 17, 1840.

The ministry is not to be entered lightly, nor without much and constant prayer for direction; but if a man's heart be set to glorify his Lord with the best service his feeble mind and body can offer, there can be nothing comparable to the ministry. I have already known some ministerial trials, and I foresee more, much hardness and much disappointment; but I may tell you from experience, that you would take nothing that earth has to offer in exchange for the joy of serving Christ as an accredited ambassador. Your kind hopes expressed for my sister are, I fear, in vain. From the moment that I saw that fatal hectic, which I know too well, I felt assured her hours on earth were numbered. May God give us grace to say from the heart, 'The Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.' I am going to see her as soon as I can.

IX.

Rodney House: October, 1840.

MY DEAREST DUESBERRY,—My date will show you that I am now at home for a little relaxation, which is very acceptable after continued work. . . . I am sorry, and yet half glad, to find by your letters that you are still unreconciled to Bermuda. I am glad, because it shows

your heart is still at home with us, uncooled by absence, and because it shows that you are unsatisfied with anything that is to be found below. I think there is something implanted in man's heart, fallen creature as he is, which defies him to be content with anything but God alone. It is a trace of original majesty, which leaves a mark of what he was before the fall. He is always panting for something fresh; and that is no sooner attained, than it palls upon his taste. And this strong necessity of loving something makes a man form idols for himself, which he invests with fancied perfections; and when all these fade away in his grasp, and he finds their unsubstantiality, he must either become a misanthrope or a Christian. When a man has learned to know the infinite love of God in Christ to him, then he discovers something which will not elude his hold, and an affection which will not grow cold; for the comparison of God's long-suffering and repeated pardon, with his own heartless ingratitude, convinces him that it is an unchangeable love. And I hope in God that your disquieted feelings will terminate in this discovery of the fulness of peace purchased by the cross of Christ. All goes on satisfactorily at Winchester, the attention and attendance, I think, gradually deepening and increasing; and I hope many are becoming more and more in earnest about their souls. My treatment I only complain of on the score of exuberant kindness. I live almost at Mr. Nicholson's, and we go on hand and heart together. I had to officiate lately at the funeral of a poor man, for a clergyman who was unable to attend. The burial-ground is on the top of a hill which overlooks Winchester, about half a mile off. I was engaged with my own duty until very late; and night was just closing in as we set off from the church. An old man came and walked by my side; we went along, and engaged in a very interesting conversation. There was something very romantic as the procession slowly wound round the

hill—the deep shadows gradually closing in ; and it rose to the sublime when we stood at the side of the grave on the top of the exposed hill. It was nearly dark ; and the dark, silent figures closing in around me, with their white hat-bands streaming in the wind, which moaned drearily, gave a solemn and unearthly aspect to the scene, especially when the coffin was lowered down into the grave, only distinguishable by its dark contrast with the snow around. Oxford term has begun. Only fancy ! It seems the dream of another life ; everything has been so entirely changed in a few months. Gowns, and lectures, and proctors, and all the conventional language and feelings of that august place, will ere long fade from the imagination. No wonder, for the work of reading has been succeeded by a sterner struggle with sin in its loathsome dens of iniquity. However, with a few exceptions, I have been well received in the worst places. It is a heavy thing the weight of souls—hard, up-hill work. Now and then, little things come out by accident which give hope. I heard that a poor woman said every word of one sermon went to her heart, and she thought I was preaching at her. It is necessary to hear these things sometimes, or it would be more than faith could bear. Yet faith would bear it. I again make the resolution to write again soon.

X.

Winchester : November 24, 1840.

MY DEAR HATCHARD,—I hasten to answer your letter, which I received on Sunday morning. Most sincerely I congratulate you on your prospect of a curacy, but much more on the approach of the highest earthly honour—the privilege of working for Christ—and welcome you to a participation of its joys and sorrows. Perhaps the latter predominate here, but they are not worthy to be compared to the joys which shall be revealed in us, if we suffer with Him. I think the strictness of self-examination for ministerial fitness is

contained in that solemn, searching question of our Lord, thrice repeated, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?’ And if we can, from our inmost souls, say as Peter did, ‘Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,’ I believe the injunction which follows, and the warning of martyrdom, would be received with equal joy as our Master’s will. I am sensible that it is a test that makes me humble ; still, notwithstanding backwardness in the work, and much yielding to sloth and self-gratification instead of sowing in faith without longing to see the fruits, I do feel that if the labour, the hard toil in the vineyard, were taken from me, I have nothing left on earth to live for. And I trust that you may have this spirit, less dulled and clouded by earthly motives and low views than it is in me. . . . J. has not succeeded in his attempt at the fellowship, and I do not know that I am sorry for it, as I believe that it would ruin him altogether to live an Oxford fellow’s selfish, dronish life.

XI.

March 4, 1841.

MY DEAR DAVIES,—. . . I received the sermons which you so kindly sent me, with much pleasure ; that especially on justification seems, under God, calculated to do good. I believe there is at this time a determined attack made by Satan and his instruments to subvert that cardinal doctrine of our best hopes—justification by faith alone ; and how far he has already succeeded let many a college in Oxford testify. It is the doctrine which, more than any other, we find our own hearts continually turning aside from and surrendering. Anything but Christ—the Virgin, the Church, the sacraments, a new set of our own resolutions ; any or all of these will the heart embrace as a means to holiness or acceptance rather than God’s way. You may even persuade men to give up their sins if they may do it without Christ ; as teetotalism can witness. And the Apostle’s resolution,

in spite of all we say, is one which we are again and again making, and yet for ever breaking, to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. . . .

XII.

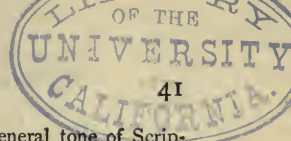
May 22, 1841.

My sister seems to grow weaker day by day; and though they seem inclined to flatter themselves that she is better, her extreme languor and continued cough tell a different tale. Alas! there is no home here, and no abiding comfort; and yet I do not know why I should say alas! for it is better to have one tie to earth severed after another till we have nothing left to live for but Christ. What emphatic energy must have been in the feeling of St. Paul when he wrote those words: *τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι, καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι*, when even we, in the midst of self-indulgence, can yearn for it! I do not wonder at the feelings you express in reading H. Martyn's letters; what a glorious instance he was of what God can make such a thing as man—little less than a seraph burning in one deathless flame of love from the moment when, as he expresses it, the last thing left on earth was taken from him, till the last burning words were traced at Tocot. It is a book that may well be blistered by hot tears of shame. Sometimes one is inclined to fancy that if a path of special usefulness could be pointed out, we might devote ourselves as he did; but I suppose this is only the usual feeling of readiness to bear any cross but that which God has put upon us. I am now reading a book of much devotional and self-denying fervour, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*. I love to feel the oneness of feeling which pervades the sons of God amidst vitally opposed communions. To see such men as Martyn and à Kempis at the right hand of Jesus in His kingdom, will be a joy that might almost compensate for a menial post there as the lowest of the low. . . .

XIII.

Hôtel de la Couronne, Geneva:
August 3, 1841.

MY DEAR STRU,—I have already sent three letters. You come fourth in the family; therefore this is directed to you. I begin from where I left off. This morning I went to call on M. Malan, without introduction, except that of many mutual acquaintances. I sat talking with him about two hours. The chief subject of discussion was that of assurance. He says that a Christian cannot be without assurance, except sinfully. This I agreed to, though not exactly on the same ground as that on which he puts it. The proof of adoption is a changed heart—2 Cor. v. 17. If a man see this change in himself, it is a proof to him that he has believed, because the work of regeneration is begun—the work which God performs in the heart of all whom He has chosen, conforming them to the image of His Son—Rom. viii. 29. If he does not see this change, it is evidently because of the predominance of sin; and therefore the want of assurance springs from sin. But Malan makes it sin, not indirectly, but directly. His argument, simply stated, is this: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. You acknowledge that. Is He the Christ? Have you any doubt? You are sure He is? or do you mean to say you do not believe that He is? But if you tell me you do believe that He is, how can you doubt your safety? Would you make God a liar? for He says that 'every one who believes is born of God.' I do not think this satisfactory, because I believe many who never will be saved are convinced of it, and so in a certain sense believe it, as the devils do who tremble, or as Simon did—Acts viii. 13—who was yet in the bond of iniquity. And it is this possibility which can make a Christian doubt his own state even when he says, I believe. Still I admit that want of assurance is the mark of very low attainments in grace: because if sanctification were so bright as to be



visible, there would be no doubt. Though a subject on which I have thought much, he gave me many new ideas. I have only mentioned one for the present.

Yesterday I dined with M. —. They were very attentive, and the conversation on all manner of subjects extremely interesting, till we came to discuss the advantages of creeds for a Church. He was for admitting all shades of opinion. I represented the object of our Church, to admit all whose opinions differed on subjects not fundamental, and exclude others. But it soon turned out that our views of fundamental questions differed entirely, and I told him we could not consider one who denied the Deity of Christ a Christian. I used this term, because I knew he would admit the 'divinity.' He then told me he did not hold the Deity. I said I could not retract, and must tremble for him. This led to a hot and long discussion. Poor — misquoted Scripture, and would make no answer to the texts I brought forward. My chief point was to prove the death of Christ not merely a demonstration of God's willingness to pardon, on repentance and obedience, but an actual substitution of suffering; and that salvation is a thing *finished* for those who believe—not a commencement of a state in which salvation may be gained; insisting especially on Heb. x. 14. But to this he would scarcely even listen, and protested against single

texts, requiring the general tone of Scripture as the only argument. It would be long to go through it all. He understood fully that the denial of his right to the name of Christian was not necessarily intolerant, but might be even charity.

I have just returned from another long discussion with Malan, before several persons, which I do not like, because calmness in argument is then always difficult. You think of your own victory instead of the truth. However, I only parried, and allowed him to cross-question me. He does it in the most affectionate and earnest manner; but I could not yield, because I believe all I said based upon God's truth. He said, 'Mon très-cher frère, vous aurez une triste vie et un triste ministère.' It may be so; but present peace is of little consequence. If we sin we must be miserable; but if we be God's own, that misery will not last long; the evidence is lost only for a time, but I do feel sure it is lost. But God's promise is so clear—'Sin shall not have dominion over you'—that the evidence must become bright again by victory. Misery for sin is better worth having than peace. I love old Malan from my very soul, and hate disputing with him, even though it is the dispute of Christian brothers. How we ought to yearn for the day when truth shall not only be, but also be felt to be *one*. . . .

CHAPTER III.

Marriage of Mr. Robertson—Death of his Sister—He takes the Curacy of Christ Church, Cheltenham—Character and Influence of his Preaching—His Despondency and its Causes—His Influence in Society—His Conversation—His Daring Character—His Reading—Extracts and Letter throwing Light on his Spiritual Development—Influences which contributed to the Change in his Opinions—Progress of this Change—Its Crisis—He Leaves Cheltenham for the Continent.

Letters during his Journey.

MR. ROBERTSON did not travel further than Geneva. He met there, and, after a short acquaintance, married, Helen, third daughter of

Sir George William Denys, Bart., of Easton Eston, Northamptonshire. Almost immediately after his marriage he returned to Cheltenham. He was

cheered by a farewell visit to Winchester—

Where (he says) many of my old congregation received me with great affection, and I preached to a very crowded church my last sermon. From what I learnt I have reason to believe that more than I had thought were savingly brought to Christ during my ministry there. If this be so, it is more than a requital for a whole life of labour.

For some months, owing to his ill-health, he was forbidden to do any regular duty. During this interval of passiveness, his mind wrought, and forged out some results from his past experience. Even at this period his freedom from party spirit, and his individuality of character, began to be recognised. He says, writing in January 1842 :—

How much some systematic preparation for the ministry is needed in our Church! We enter it almost without chart or compass; and I suppose the Anglican Church alone exhibits the strange spectacle so common amongst us of a deacon entrusted with the *sole* charge of souls. I hope not to be alone for some years to come, if God should spare me so long. I have preached here several times, and been set down sometimes as a Tractarian, sometimes as an ultra-Calvinist. I trust the accusations neutralise each other, for they are most certainly incompatible. If a man will really endeavour to avoid Popery, either that of Rome or that of a party, and practically hold the real Protestant doctrine of the supremacy of Scripture, I suppose he must be content to come into collision with conventional phraseology, and several received views. Yet it is somewhat hard to unflinchingly incur the suspicion of those whom, on the whole, you believe to be God's people, although it is so easy to keep out of sight what is un-

palatable. I am much tempted to it sometimes in the pulpit, and in conversations.

In February of the same year, his sole surviving sister, Emma, died. She had long been lingering into death. He watched her with a brother's affection, and the whole image of her patience crept into 'his study of imagination,' and impressed him with a more solemn sense of duty and eternity. He writes in February :—

Dear, dear girl! you cannot dream the holiness which filled her young mind, increasing daily and rapidly till she departed to be perfect. There had been a subdued calmness about her for years, which made the earnestness with which she sometimes expressed her opinion on vital truths more striking and more lovely. She had left us all behind, far; and when I think of her, I am disgusted with the frivolity and worldliness of my own heart. Is it credible that a man can have known Christ for six years, and believed that there is in store an inheritance whose very essence is holiness, and yet be still tampering with the seductions, and follies, and passions of this wretched place? I trust this solemn scene may make us all who have witnessed it more in earnest, and more single in heart and purpose. The days are fleeting away, and there is little done for Christ, much for self and sloth. And I sometimes shudder, when I wake, as it were, for a moment, to remember that while we are dallying, the wheels of the chariot of the Judge do not tarry too, but are hurrying on with what will be to some among us fearful rapidity. My dear Hatchard, what need we have to pray for an ever serious, solemn mind, and an unresting sense of the presence of God within and around us! The startling silence in the room where the last of my darling sisters lies, has chilled my heart with a cold feeling of certainty that most of our life and profession is mockery. To serve the Eternal *so!*

Before his sister's death occurred, he had been inquiring for a curacy. He wrote to Mr. Hatchard in January, 1842 :—

I am grieved to hear your account of yourself. Take care. Depend upon it, you will gain nothing by a press of steam, as I now acknowledge with bitterness : indeed, I do not expect ever to be worth much again. Can you tell me of a curacy which combines diametrically opposed qualities—sufficiency of stipend and easiness of work? By easiness, I mean half services, that is, I cannot take any duty single-handed, but must have either a resident rector, or a stipend sufficient to procure regular assistance. I have had a district church mentioned to me. Such a thing would just suit me.

The curacy of this district church, the incumbent of which was the Rev. Archibald Boyd, now incumbent of St. James, Paddington, was offered to him and accepted. He entered on his duties in the summer of 1842, and performed them for nearly five years. The only external events which marked these years of his life were the birth of three children and the death of one.

It was fortunate for him at this time that he had formed a high estimate of his rector. It was all-important for him, in a place like Cheltenham, that a great reverence for another should keep him humble, and that eager emulation after an ideal should prevent him from being carried away by the passing excitements of society.

Writing to Mr. Hatchard in the beginning of his second year at Cheltenham, 1843, he says :—

28, Park Place, Cheltenham:
February 9, 1843.

MY DEAR HATCHARD,—Many thanks for your kind congratulations, and *long*

letter. I feel considerably antiquated by being invested with the honour of pater-nity, and already experience a sort of fore-taste of its cares and responsibilities. I am thankful to say both my dear charges are going on far better than I could have hoped, and I only trust that I may be enabled to realise the promise inseparably annexed to 'training,' for otherwise I should feel indeed a heavy sinking at the prospect of my boy's future career.

I am sorry to read your account of your rector's ill health. What you quote from Bishop Hall is very true in *some cases*. God grant that when we are called our work *may be done*. Poor Grotius' motto lies sometimes heavy at my heart—'*Vitam perdidit operosè nihil agendo.*' You tell me nothing of your work. Mine is far less satisfactory than at Winchester, partly from the superficial nature of this place, in which I would not remain another day but for the sake of my coadjutor and leader ; partly from the effect of the temptations and the frittering away of time almost inseparable from a residence here.

Mr. Robertson always preached in the afternoon. He soon began to exercise upon his congregation his peculiar power of fascination. It was the fascination not only of natural gifts of voice, and speech, and manner, but also of intellect warmed into a vivid life by the deepest earnestness. Mr. Dobson, formerly the principal of Cheltenham College, says of him, in a letter to his father :—

I well remember the first sermon I ever heard him preach at Cheltenham. It required little sagacity to discover, even from a single specimen, that he was no ordinary man. Even at this moment I can see him, then in almost youthful beauty, raising his hand above his head as he closed his sermon with the words, 'The banner of the cross, without taking up which,' he said, 'no man could be a Christian.' This

generation will not look upon his like again.

Another friend, who has given much information as to his Cheltenham life, writes:—

I had taken a prejudice against him, through no fault of his, when it was my good fortune to hear him preach. At this time he had just become curate to Mr. Boyd. I was not merely struck, but startled by the sermon. The high order of thought, the large and clear conception, the breadth of view, the passion held in leash, the tremulously earnest tone, the utter forgetfulness of self in his subject, and the abundance of the heart out of which the mouth spake, made me feel that here, indeed, was one whom it would be well to miss no opportunity of hearing.

From the first he largely swayed those minds which had any point of contact with his own. In spite of what he says himself of Cheltenham, in its depreciation, he had very many hearers there who knew how to rate him at his proper value, before a larger public had endorsed it. Nor was it among the lay men and women of Cheltenham alone that he made his influence felt. I have been told that at the clerical meetings he attended, he would, for the most part, remain silent, but that sometimes, when many of his brethren were in difficulty about the meaning of a text, he would startle them by saying a few simple words which shed a flood of new light upon the passage. He never put himself forward on these occasions, but his talents were none the less recognised and held in honour by the foremost of his brother clergymen. For all this admiration, as admiration, he did not care. He could not be contented with anything short of the visible influence of his preaching on the life of men. This is plainly shown in the following letter, which I enclose you.

'MY DEAR —,—I do not conceal from you that it gave me pleasure to hear

that what I said on Sunday had been *felt*, not that it had been *admired*. God knows that is not the thing that would give me joy. If I wanted that, I should write and act very differently from what I do. But it comes, like a gleam of fitful sunshine now and then across a very bewildered path, to find that there are chords from which one can strike harmony, albeit with a rude and unskilful hand. Such things startle and thrill me now and then, as I suppose the strange melody would have done, coming so unexpectedly, when the first sunbeams fell on Memnon's statue—for to say the truth, it comes often very heavily upon my heart what is meant by that,—

As it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it
as a sword.

Or:—

ἔχθιστη ὁδὴν πολλὰ φρονέοντα μηδέως
κρατεῖν.

'Yours ever, &c., &c.'

This letter suggests one of the reasons of his great despondency during his stay at Cheltenham—he believed his sermons to be unintelligible. There were some causes for this belief, but they were not peculiar causes. There are always some in every congregation who will depreciate a curate, and contrast him, however superior, with an incumbent; and there are always others who can understand nothing which is original, whom an argument couched in novel terms bewilders. But common as these things are, they touched this uncommon nature in a special manner. Through the mist which his own sensitiveness created he saw the misconception of a few magnified into a phantom of failure.

One Sunday (writes the same friend), he had been using all his eloquence to show

that this world without religion is a riddle, and that the Christian religion is the only key to it. The next day he received an anonymous letter from one of those lady hearers whom he was wont playfully to call his 'muslin episcopate,' in which he was told that Christianity made all the difficulties he spoke of plain. 'So much,' he said to me, in a tone of bitterness, 'for the good effects that follow from my preaching.' To the end of his life it was the same. He always would look upon the misfortune of want of intellect in others as a fault of his own. That he was not so unintelligible as his fancy deemed, even when he had simple, untaught intellects to deal with, is plain from this circumstance, that when he had taken charge of a rural parish in one of his Cheltenham vacations, the church, almost empty when first he came, was rapidly filled by illiterate country people, who showed the same breathless interest in his sermons as the most cultivated hearers to whom he preached at Brighton. On another occasion I well remember, when spending part of a summer holiday with him, how the newly-built church, which stood apart from the village in a park, became more and more frequented every Sunday by goodly farmers and rustic labourers, who listened to him, all eyes and ears, with a pleasant mixture of delight and astonishment. To whatsoever class he spoke, the language of his sympathies made him intelligible.

Owing to his clerical profession he thought himself, at this period at least, debarred from all participation in any of the manlier sports which, by bracing his physical frame, would have counteracted his over-excitable mental temperament. He allowed himself none of the healthful exercises which he so passionately loved, except an occasional walk and ride into the country. The absence of these exercises tended to deepen his despondency; but the chief cause of

his want of heart was his belief that his work at Cheltenham was a failure.

This melancholy fancy (continues his friend) took more and more possession of him during the latter part of his curacy, but even at the very outset it darkened round him. It was partly created by his extraordinary admiration of his rector. It was a great disadvantage to him that he had to take the afternoon sermon, when an hour before he had been listening to one that his partial judgment perhaps overrated. So difficult was it for him to believe that anything he said was worthy of the place where his incumbent had preached, that during the whole of his Cheltenham career he never seemed at ease in the pulpit, he never did justice to himself, he never spoke with satisfaction to himself. He overshadowed himself by his creation of an ideal which he did not hope even to approach. Another cause of the melancholy fancy I have spoken of was his scrupulosity of conscience. It led him to regard as duties left undone those which others might deem only too well performed. Often in coming home at night he would walk with me for hours, and talk of the little good that he was doing. And when I have tried to comfort him by saying that he was sowing seed which would germinate in the future, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold, he has pointed to the pavement on which we were walking together, and asked 'if I thought he might reap a harvest there.'

'Sad and dispirited'—such is an entry in his diary, 1845—'from feeling my own utter uselessness and want of aim. Surely man's misery is want of work. I mourn not that I cannot be happy, but that I know not what to do, nor how to do it.' He threw the shadow of these thoughts round Cheltenham itself, and professed in his letters from Brighton that, but for a few friends there, he would never visit it again. In all this he wronged him-

self, as well as many of his friends. He speaks in later letters from Brighton of the pleasure he felt in finding so many true hearts in Cheltenham. But wherever his sensitive fancy as to his own work in life comes into play, he must not be judged out of his own mouth. He arraigns himself, in a letter to a friend, 'for poor unvisited, and duties left undone :—

And yet (says this friend), I recollect his calling on me just before his going abroad, as late as ten o'clock at night, and taking me with him a distance of three miles, through such a storm as Lear was out in, to visit a poor, disconsolate old man, who seemed to have shut himself out from human sympathies, and therefore all the more enlisted his. I never knew one whose care and constant kindness to the poor could compare with his.

In a private diary kept in 1845, there are long lists of poor and sick whom he visited, and accounts of sums paid out of a small income to clear off the debts of struggling workmen; and no man who could write the following letter to one of his early friends could in reality be backward in labour for Christ :—

Cheltenham : November 28, 1843.

MY DEAR DAVIES,—Your affectionate letter has lain long unanswered. But I was away on a tour on the Continent of some duration when it arrived, and since I have been much engaged in preparing candidates for confirmation. What a solemn charge the ministry is! I feel it more day by day, and my own unfitness for it. Surely a man would almost give it up if he dared. We do things, most of us at least, so badly, so half-heartedly, and self creeps in amidst it all so much, that it all seems one great mass of impurity, which would weigh us down with a sense of intolerable guilt, if it were not that we have something to

interpose between our demerits and punishment. It is a privilege to know this. There is nothing but this which can give serenity. At the same time it is a great privilege, too, to know that the Gospel is a system of resources by which we are to become purer and better day by day. It is a grand thing to be a Christian. It is a magnificent hope that we are ever to become partakers of the Divine Nature.

Not only in public but in private was his influence felt. He was cordially welcomed everywhere; but it was in the circle of his own immediate friends that his fascination was most apparent. It had all the character of genius. He was utterly unconscious of it. He never spoke for display; and yet, 'I have seen him,' said a friend, 'take a flower, and rivet the attention of his listener with a glittering stream of eloquent and glowing words, which he poured forth without premeditation and almost as a soliloquy.' The spirit he possessed sanctified the influence he gained from these gifts of nature. He clothed them with the graces of a Christian. His daily and hourly life—his little acts as well as his greater—his words in society, were all regulated, balanced, and checked by his ceaseless remembrance of the life of Christ as the highest life, and by his continual sense of the presence of God. All was done 'ever as in his great Taskmaster's eye.' His graceful courtesies did not merely spring from natural kindness of heart, but were matter with him of Christian duty. In the drawing-room, he would separate himself from those he liked best to converse with, and spend a great part of the evening by the side of the most neglected, sacrificing himself to brighten a dull existence. Perhaps his influence on society was more

powerful, as more insensible, than his influence in the pulpit.

Society, in its turn, had a power over him. He easily received impressions. Some of his highest and best thoughts were kindled by sparks which fell from the minds of his friends. His intercourse, even with those inferior to himself, was always fruitful. He took their ideas, which they did not recognise as such, and, as first discoverer, used them as his own; but they were always made more practical and better for the use. Even of thoughts which he received from those to whom they belonged by right of conscious possession he made himself the master. One from whom he borrowed says of him, 'It was not that he appropriated what belonged to others, but that he made it his own by the same tenure as property is first held—by the worth he gave it.' To such a man society was necessary. He needed its impulse, its clash of opinions, and, in some degree, its excitement; and he always spoke best, wrote best, and acted best, when he was kindled either into combativeness or admiration by the events which stir the heart of humanity.

He was a marvellously bright and eloquent talker. His sermons gave no idea of the uninterrupted river of his speech. It had all the variety of a great stream—quick, rushing and passionate when his wrath was awakened against evil; running in a sparkling glitter for many a mile of conversation, over art, and poetry, and science, and the topics of the day, with power at will to stay its course and collect itself into a quiet seriousness of waters—again shooting impetuously, yet without a false curve of its glancing water, when it got into

the gorge and among the rocks of an argument; and flowing with a breadth and depth, a fulness and strength of stream, with a thousand eddies of illustrations and thoughts bubbling out of the opulence of its depths, when it expanded and went stately forward over a great subject. He conversed, or rather spoke, best in the open air. He liked to walk or ride when he talked, that he might put Nature under contribution to illustrate his ideas. Physical exercise gave nerve to his thinking and health to his views of things. He took deep pleasure in the scenery which surrounded Cheltenham. The aspect of Nature's life, the freshness of summer air, took possession of him, played in his blood, and quickened into excitement all the daring and courage which, at times, transformed him from the clergyman of the nineteenth century into the bright young knight of the Middle Ages. One day, riding with his wife and some friends, he put his horse at a lofty hedge. It was a dangerous leap. The horse refused it again and again. His friends, who saw all the hazard, for the ground was hard on the other side, dissuaded him earnestly from another effort. But he could not bear to be conquered; and he did not believe in danger. The horse urged, at last cleared the hedge, but came down with such a crash on the other side, and with his rider under him, that the lookers-on thought both must have sustained serious injury. Robertson got up smiling; but afterwards owned he had been much too rash. His courage was always greater than his love of life. It is no wonder, with such a spirit, matched with so chivalrous a heart, that he often thought that he had mistaken his profession, and said

to his friends, 'that he would rather lead a forlorn hope, than mount the pulpit stairs.' He believed in his own courage, and honoured it without a shade of vain delight in it. Once, when walking with a friend at Cheltenham, his little boy became frightened from some slight reason. On his friend remarking it, and saying that perhaps the child lacked courage, he turned sharply round and said, 'Courage—want courage! he should never be a son of mine!'

On one occasion (writes a gentleman who knew him well at Cheltenham), he had been asked to preach at a church where the congregation was chiefly composed of those whom Pope describes as passing from 'a youth of frolics' to 'an old age of cards.' I accompanied him, and listened curiously for his text. It was this, 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' The sermon was most impressive and eloquent, and bold in its denunciation. Returning home, he asked me if I thought he was right in preaching it. I answered, 'that it was very truthful; but, considering the character of the clergyman whose pulpit he occupied by courtesy, and the character of the congregation, not a discreet sermon. It might have been as truthful without apparently setting both minister and people at defiance.' 'You are quite right,' he answered; 'but the truth was this: I took two sermons with me into the pulpit, uncertain which to preach; but, just as I had fixed upon the other, something seemed to say to me, "Robertson, you are a craven, you dare not speak here what you believe;" and I immediately pulled out the sermon that you heard, and preached it as you heard it.'

This anecdote, as well as that of the leap, displays more rashness than true courage. He learnt afterwards that far loftier courage which has no

necessity to prove its own existence to itself.

During this life at Cheltenham, his intellectual power became rapidly greater, in proportion as his individuality of character increased. As he freed himself from conventional forms of thought, he secured a mental grasp and vigour which he had not at Winchester. (He began now to hew out his own path to his convictions.) His continuous reading of Carlyle marks the state of intellectual ferment in which he now lived. 'I have gained good and energy from that book,' he says, speaking of 'Past and Present.' He read a great many historical books; and it is curious to find that, in preparing for his class on the books of Samuel, he had not recourse to commentaries, but to Niebuhr's Rome and Guizot's work on civilization, and to books on political economy. Tennyson and Dante seem to have been the poets whom he chiefly read, though his reading of this class of literature must have been large, since the lectures on poetry which he delivered at Brighton were first delivered, though not so fully, at Cheltenham. Dante he seems to have read every day, and to have committed the whole of the 'Inferno' to memory during 1845. German metaphysics took up some of his time, and usefully. He had the rare power of extracting out of them what was practical and of rejecting, while his subtle intellect played with pleasantly, their fine woven gossamer of ideas. He still kept up his early interest in scientific pursuits, especially chemistry; and he relieved his leisure with the study of physical geography. He had a useful habit of reading on the questions of the day. When the Maynooth grant was being contested,

he made notes of all the debates, and read, in order to form a clear opinion, Burke on the Irish Laws, Lingard, and Hallam. This was his constant practice; and owing to it he was always ready with a well-considered view of all the subjects which had agitated the country during his career.

With regard to his inner life while at Cheltenham, the silent agony and labour of his spirit in much gloom and anxiety, there is little to record. The following extracts, not having anything peculiarly private about them, and throwing light upon his spiritual life, are given. One is dated 1843, the other 1845:—

1843.

Meditation for Prayer.—To plead the glory of God manifested to others in the preservation of his people, and the perpetuating, at the same time, of his fear in their own breasts, as an argument to be used before his throne, that He would conduct me into peace. Joshua iv. 24, viii. 9; Exodus xxxii. 12; Daniel xix. 19; Joel ii. 17.

To ask for love which I have not, as a free gift, that which I cannot force upon myself, see 1 John iv. 8. Communion with God is not to be attained by abstraction and asceticism, but by the development of Christian sympathies. 1 John iv. 12.

Self-denial in Eating.—Motives: my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Excess will incapacitate me from glorifying Him; it will produce listlessness, discontent with self, and therefore with others. Hence the Christian graces cannot shine in me. It will give earthly and grovelling views, and cause me to forget my state of pilgrimage. It will be a precedent for fresh indulgence, generally, as well as particularly, in the same temptation. It will prevent reading and meditation, weaken my sense of God's presence, and my own acceptance, by losing the evidence of integrity. It will close my lips in speaking

to others of Christ's self-denial. If observed, it will give a handle for reproach, and a right to enemies to accuse me of inconsistency, and give to them a handle to strengthen them in persisting against an unworldly life. It is a paltry trial for a child of glory to fail in. It is a base return for the washing of the blood of Christ. It is a temptation expressly mentioned as unfitting for the ἀποκαρδοκία of the second coming of Christ. προσέχετε δὲ ἑαυτοῖς, μήποτε βαρυνθῶσιν ὑμῶν αἱ καρδίαι ἐν κραυγῇ καὶ μέθῃ καὶ μερμυραῖς βιωτικαῖς, καὶ ἀφηνείδιος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἐπιστῆ ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκεῖνη.—Luke xxi. 34.

In sleeping, early rising is to commence the day with an act of self-denial, which, as it were, gives the mind a tone for the whole day. It redeems time for early prayer, thereby dedicating the first warm aspirations to God, before the dull, and deadening, and earthward influences of the world have had time to impair the freshness of early feeling. It gives calmness to the day. Late rising is the prelude to a day in which everything seems to go wrong.

1845.

Resolves.—To try to learn to be thoroughly poor in spirit, meek, and to be ready to be silent when others speak.

To learn from every one.

To try to feel my own insignificance.

To believe in myself, and the powers with which I am intrusted.

To try to make conversation more useful, and therefore to store my mind with facts, yet to be on my guard against a wish to shine.

To try to despise the principle of the day, 'every man his own trumpeter'; and to feel it a degradation to speak of my own doings, as a poor braggart.

To endeavour to get over the adulterous-generation-habit of seeking a sign. I want a loud voice from Heaven to tell me a thing is wrong, whereas a little experience of its results is enough to prove that God is against it. It does not cohere with the everlasting laws of the universe.

To speak less of self, and think less.

To aim at more concentration of thought.

To try to overcome castle-building.

To be systematic in visiting; and to make myself master of some system of questions for ascertaining the state of the poor.

To listen to conscience, instead of, as Pilate did, to intellect.

To try to fix attention on Christ, rather than on the doctrines of Christ.

To preserve inviolable secrecy on all secrets committed to me, especially on any confidential communication of spiritual perplexities.

To take deep interest in the difficulties of others so communicated.

To perform rigorously the examen of conscience.

To try to fix my thoughts in prayer, without distraction.

To contend, one by one, against evil thoughts.

To watch over a growing habit of uncharitable judgment.

The following letter, though immature in thought and weak in expression, bears witness to the delicacy and strength of his sympathy, and mirrors his Christian thought:—

1845.

MY DEAR MRS. —, —The sight of your handwriting was a most warm pleasure to me. It brought back old days—days which it would be very strange if I could forget. But I was much saddened by the contents of your note, because its tone, though subdued and calm, evidenced a long, dark struggle with anguish, which has almost been too keen to bear. And, oh! how little we know one another's bitternesses—how little we suspect the hours of secret agony and cold struggle that every earnest, loving heart has to go through in this most unintelligible world! Sometimes it seems to me a marvel how we can ever smile again, so often does life seem to shrivel into a failure and a nothingness. I think I

can conceive your trial, and partly imagine that worst feature of all suffering, its incommunicable, lonely sensation. To be where we and those around us are living in two different worlds of feeling, is tenfold more intolerable than to be where a foreign language, not one word of which we understand, is spoken all day long. Those have always seemed to me words from the very brink of the infinite of feeling: 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not,' &c. I would with all my heart that I could feel for you as I could wish to feel, or even that I could distinctly express such feeling as I have. To a certain extent I should have a right to do this, for I know something of what you have lost. A most warm, affectionate, and unselfish friend was taken from me when God bereaved you. But I do feel that sympathy from man, in sorrow such as yours, is almost mockery. None can feel it, and, certainly, none can soothe it except the Man Christ Jesus, whose infinite bosom echoes back every throb of yours. To my own heart, that marvellous fact of God enduing Himself with a human soul of sympathy is the most precious, and the one I least could afford to part with of all the invigorating doctrines which everlasting truth contains. That Christ feels *now* what we feel—our risen ascended Lord—and that He can impart to us, in our fearful wrestlings, all the blessedness of his sympathy, is a truth which, to my soul, stands almost without a second. I do pray that, in all its fulness, this may be yours—a truth to rest and live upon.

Next to that, stands the deep meaning of the cross, that we are perfected through suffering. What worthy crown can any son of man wear upon this earth, except a crown of thorns? Sore struggle, darkness, loneliness—but with all that the true battle of an earnest soul in its terrible struggle into light and clearness, up to God—that is your portion now. And, oh! may God stand by you, and teach you that a Christian's motto everywhere and always is Victory. I look

forward anxiously to seeing you. My wife sends her very kind wishes.

On the whole, these years were years of advance, but every step of the path was over a conquered enemy. It was during this period that the basis of his theological science was entirely changed; his principles of thought attained, but not as yet harmonised with one another; his system of interpreting the Bible proved and verified; his whole view of the relation of God to man and man to God slowly built up into a new temple on the ruins of the old. When he began his ministry at Cheltenham, many common and many peculiar religious experiences; many elements of belief conquered out of doubt; many elements of doubt itself, enthusiasms, speculations, memories of strange feelings, and secret feelings which led him into either too poetical or too despairing a view of life, were, as it were, floating in solution. When his ministry at Oxford began, his character and his principles were fixed for life.

(The outward influences which most contributed to his development were the friendships he formed, and the circumstances of his ministry at Cheltenham. The warmth of his affections made him take the highest view of the duties of friendship. Even while he was proclaiming in his letters something like misanthropy and indifference to his friends, he was always ready to spend everything in their service. His heart conquered easily, and in a moment, his philosophy. The chivalry of his nature made him believe all things of those he loved. 'I recollect almost irritating him once,' said a gentleman, 'because I maintained with regard to a friend that his moral qualities out-

shone his intellectual.' Hence his affection sometimes vitiated his judgment, and he idealized his friends into a perfection which often did not belong to them. One result of this was, that when a friend failed him, and his idol fell from its pedestal, the shock almost broke his heart. Another, and the most important, was, that the greatest changes in his life and modes of thought were wrought in a large degree through the influence of his friends. Not that he was ever a passive instrument on which they played, but that the chords they struck made him conscious of the music in himself: their sympathy drew him out, and sometimes quickened his whole nature into an almost preternatural activity of thought and feeling, during which any swift reflection or quick return of his own or a cognate thought, even any deep interest on the part of another, kindled so intense a fire of creative force that his words seemed to pour forth red-hot with the rapidity and earnestness of an imagination which gathered fresh fuel from its own consumption.

Above all, he needed the sympathy, the reciprocity of thought, the consciousness of being understood, which a true and deep friendship gives. And yet this was the man who afterwards, at Brighton, partly by circumstances, partly by his own nature, was driven into the deepest solitariness of heart; whom God saw right to separate from almost all his brethren, and to surround with slander and misunderstanding, that he might learn to 'stand alone, in the strength of manlier independence;' that, divided from human sympathy, like his master, Christ, he might be able to enter into and to teach, as none else have done so well in that generation, the character of the human life of

the Saviour. It is a truth always new from its strangeness—that the prophet must be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; despised and rejected of men: that the consoler must be one who feels all that is human keenly, but who is unfelt for himself by men.

He had boyish friendships, which he characterised as 'full of sudden impulses; of impetuous, passionate attachment; of protestations, vows of constancy, prodigality of promises.' The friendship of the years of manhood he defines 'as not mere intimacy, but as exclusive, personal regard, mingled with reciprocity of feeling; as founded on the communion of like with like, or of unlike with unlike;' and a passage in one of his unpublished sermons at once gives the depth with which he felt, and the opinion which he held with regard to the origin of a friendship:—

Hearts are linked to hearts by God. The friend on whose fidelity you count, whose success in life flushes your cheek with honest satisfaction, whose triumphant career you have traced and read with a heart throbbing almost as if it were a thing alive, for whose honour you would answer as for your own; that friend, given to you by circumstances over which you had no control, was God's own gift.

One of these friends was Mr. Boyd. The admiration which he expresses for his rector in his earlier letters from Cheltenham rapidly passed into an affection which was rendered delicate by a veneration almost childlike. Indeed, there was nothing more beautiful in his nature than the innocent faith which always sought for and believed in the nobility of others. He saw his friends through the atmosphere of his own love and truthfulness, and when,

as sometimes happened, he was, against his will, convinced that what he saw was partially at least an air-built castle, the beauty of which was his own creation, the blow fell heavily and sorely on his heart. The influence of this friendship was, however, clearly marked. It bore fruit in his sermons. Under the impulse given by those of Mr. Boyd, they became entirely changed in character. Instead of writing them in one morning, without preparation, as he did at Winchester, he studied for them on Thursday and Friday, and wrote them carefully on Saturday. They were no longer so much disquisitions on doctrine or mere impassioned descriptions of the love of God in Christ. Their tone was more intellectual, without being less earnest; their generalisations more daring, and their practical teaching wider. Especially he learnt to enter into the more minute and subtler phases of Christian life. Through the ideal which friendship created, much of his peculiar *intellectual* power in preaching was drawn to the light.

The other friendship which influenced him largely was formed with a gentleman well read in metaphysics, and acquainted with the results of the sudden outburst in this century of theological and philosophical excitement in Germany. He had faced as subjects of intellectual inquiry, those questions which Robertson had faced as subjects of personal spiritual experience. Both desired, with a most single purpose, truth, as the end of their speculations. Their conversations were frequent and interesting, and it was partially, at least, due to this friendship that Mr. Robertson escaped from the trammels which had confined his intellect and his spirit.

The circumstances which, independent of friendship, most tended to change his theological views, and his principles of spiritual thought, were connected with the state of religious feeling in Cheltenham. The controversy of the 'Tracts for the Times' was at its height when he entered on his curacy. The town was a hot-bed of religious excitement. There were the usual tests of orthodoxy applied to every new clergyman, and the usual ban placed on those who could not repeat their Shibboleth. Popular preachers were adopted as leaders of party; and to hold certain doctrines, and to speak certain phrases, and to feel certain feelings, was counted equivalent to a Christian life by many among their congregations. This is common enough, and Mr. Robertson came into contact with it at Brighton as well as at Cheltenham. But coming from Winchester, where there was little or none of this popular religion, and where his work lay among the poor, who do not make so great a parade of their spiritual life, he was shocked by the contrast. At first, with his unquestioning charity, he believed that all who spoke of Christ were Christlike. But he was rudely undeceived. His truthful character, his earnestness, at first unconsciously, and afterwards consciously, recoiled from all the unreality around him. He was so pained by the expression of religious emotion which fell from those who were living a merely fashionable life, that he states himself, in one of his letters, that he gave up reading all books of a devotional character, lest he should be lured into the same habit of feeling without acting. His conception, also, of Christianity as the religion of just and loving tolerance,

and of Christ as the king of men through the power of meekness, made him draw back with horror from the violent and blind denunciation which the 'religious' agitators and the 'religious' papers of the extreme portion of the Evangelical party indulged in under the cloak of Christianity. 'They tell lies,' he said, 'in the name of God; others tell them in the name of the devil: that is the only difference.'

It was this, and other things of the same kind, which first shook his faith in Evangelicalism. He was an upright, faithful follower of that school at college and Winchester, and, strange to say, a rigid Sabbatarian. The following letters mark the point of view he occupied when he had been a year at Cheltenham:—

I quite agree with you about the Calvinistic doctrines. I think we ought to preach them in the proportion in which they are found in Scripture, connected always with election unto holiness. The fact is, we have one thing, and only one, to do here on earth—to win the character of heaven before we die. This is practical, and simple to understand. We cannot do it alone; but the Spirit's agency is given us under our present dispensation to mould us by his influences into the image of God. And with this great truth, what madness it is to spend our time in speculating about our election! I preach it, I trust, uncompromisingly and unmistakably; but as a topic of preaching, I desire to make it very subordinate to the end towards which it converges, the restoration of sinners to the heavenly purity which they have lost.

Cheltenham: January 10, 1843.

It seems to me that, at the Reformation and subsequently, the error of stickling about non-essentials was shared equally by both sides. If the High Church party were unpardonable for making them a matter

of life and death, the Puritans were surely not blameless in dividing the Church upon such matters. It may be very true that, like the schoolboy who lived 'once upon a time,' they refused to say A, because they knew that they would next be compelled to say B; but still it would have been better to have waited for this, and made the stand on a vital point instead of a ridiculous one.

. . . . I think the *principle* is an important one at this crisis, however the application may be dubious in detail. We need to walk warily and circumspectly, 'giving no occasion.' Offence there will be soon, because our principles cannot amalgamate by any device—not even a second edition of No. 90; with the Tractarians it is *bellum internecinum*. But I would reserve the contest till principle is at stake; and until it comes to genuflections at the altar, I think there is scarcely any external matter that might not be complied with. I wish we were together. You ask after my plans. I have none, but am just waiting till my path is pointed out. I fear there is no chance of my remaining here. My life has been so full of changes, that I scarcely look at anything now as if it were permanent; perhaps I have too much of this feeling; for it prevents my forming plans till the opportunity is past.

1843.

. . . . Now for your questions. I think Dr. Pusey's doctrine on the Eucharist just as dangerous, but much more incredible, than transubstantiation. I think the Vice-Chancellor might have given him an opportunity of recanting, but I am very glad he did not, for it would have only prolonged a useless controversy. As to the Church of England, I am hers, *ex animo*. I do not mean to say that if I had written her baptismal service, I should have exactly expressed myself as she has done; but take her as she is, 'With all thy faults I love thee still.' As to the state of the Evangelical clergy, I think it lamentable. I see sentiment instead of principle, and a

miserable, mawkish religion superseding a state which once was healthy. Their adherents I love less than themselves, for they are but the copies of their faults in a larger edition. Like yourself, I stand nearly alone, a theological Ishmael. The Tractarians despise me, and the Evangelicals somewhat loudly express their doubts of me.

These letters were written in 1843. In the following years doubts and questionings began to stir in his mind. He could not get rid of them. They were forced upon him by his reading and his intercourse with men. They grew and tortured him. His teaching in the pulpit altered, and it became painful to him to preach. He was reckoned of the Evangelical school, and he began to feel that his position was becoming a false one. He felt the excellence, earnestness, and gladly recognised the work of the nobler portion of that party; but he felt also that he must separate from it. In his strong reaction from its extreme tendencies, he understood with a shock, which upturned his whole inward life for a time, that the system on which he had founded his whole faith and work could never be received by him again. Within its pale, for him, there was henceforward neither life, peace, nor reality. It was not, however, till almost the end of his ministry at Cheltenham that this became clearly manifest to him. It had been slowly growing into a conviction. An outward blow—the sudden ruin of a friendship which he had wrought, as he imagined, for ever into his being—a blow from which he never afterwards wholly recovered—accelerated the inward crisis, and the result was a period of spiritual agony so awful that it not only shook his health to

its centre, but smote his spirit down into so profound a darkness, that of all his early faiths but one remained : ' It must be right to do right.' He had passed up the hill Difficulty with youthful ardour; he had been glad in the Beautiful house, and seen the Delectable mountains from afar; he had gone down the hill with enthusiasm and pleasant thoughts; but Apollyon met him in the valley, and broken by the battle, but unsubdued, he walked in tenfold gloom through the valley of the Shadow of Death, with the fiends whispering dark doubts in his ears, till he half believed them to be his own—stumbling and fainting, but ever going onwards—till at last emerging victorious he went up upon the hills to see with clearer vision than before through the glass of faith the shining of the Celestial City. This is no mere fanciful parallel. Abstracting some passages evidently put in to suit the especial subject on which he spoke, and those to whom he spoke, the following extract from his lecture to working men, delivered at Brighton, is a description of his own experience at this period, when, leaving Cheltenham, he wandered alone through the Tyrol :—

It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditionary opinions which have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning, and seems shrivelled into a span; when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name,

and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God Himself has disappeared. In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counsellors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle doubts, which for aught he knows may arise from the fountain of truth itself; to extinguish, as a glare from hell, that which for aught he knows may be light from heaven, and everything seemed wrapped in hideous uncertainty, I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scathless; it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God, and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he who—when all is drear and cheerless within and without, when his teachers terrify him, and his friends shrink from him—has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear, bright day.

I appeal to the recollection of any man who has passed through that hour of agony, and stood upon the rock at last, the surges stilled below him, and the last cloud drifted from the sky above, with a faith, and hope, and trust no longer traditional, but of his own—a trust which neither earth nor hell shall shake thenceforth for ever.

A friend to whom he confided his mental difficulties has given the following account. After stating that Mr. Robertson belonged to the Evangelical party, he proceeds :—

He was led to reconsider his views. But the reopening of any vital question was, in his case, attended with infinite pain. His liberality was so great that he allowed every question to remain open for a time; his earnestness was so great that he brought his best judgment to bear upon it, and very soon arrived at a conclusion. Then he considered the question closed. He would not suffer its ghost to haunt him. When he was forced, therefore, to reconsider a subject of great religious importance, he was deeply distressed. The examination of particular points of belief involved him in the examination of a great deal more. When the rains descended, and the floods came, and the wind beat upon his house, he must needs go down and look at its foundation. He suffered severely during the latter part of his stay at Cheltenham. He did not willingly say much to me; but there was something which he could not hide from a friend, which allowed him no rest for the sole of his foot. His health so suffered that I urged the necessity of giving up his curacy, and advised him to go abroad. I accompanied him as far as Liège, where we parted, and he pursued his way to the Tyrol.

At Ostend and Brussels he fell in with old friends, who seemed to cheer him, but the real state of his mind at this period may best be gathered from two letters written to me from the Tyrol and from Heidelberg. I have thought it right to send you these letters, because, while I would jealously guard his memory, it does not seem to me wise to let the public have half-views of him, or think that anything is kept back which may help them to form a true estimate of the man. Their publication will do him no harm, and may do the truth-seeking part of the world much good. Any false impression they may create will be corrected by himself in the letters of his later life.

During his stay at Heidelberg he plunged deeply into German metaphysics and theology. So the holiday which should have

been given to health, was given to the solution of those hard problems, by the consideration of which his health had been undermined. It is no wonder that, labouring thus night and day, he returned to Cheltenham less physically improved than his friends had hoped for, though calmer and more composed in mind. His soul had been stirred to its very depths, and had not yet had time to settle. The wine did not yet run clearly. He did not seek for sympathy. He was accustomed, as he said, to consume his own smoke. But he could not do this so entirely that his friends could not guess what was going on within. One of these, I recollect, who was with him at the English Lakes, said to him one day with some sharpness, pointing to the summit of Skiddaw, which was unseen the while for mist, 'I would not have my head, like the peak of that mountain, involved, as we see it now, in cloud, for all that you could offer me.' 'I would,' rejoined Robertson, quickly, 'for, by-and-by, the cloud and mist will roll away, and the sun will come down upon it in all his glory.'

He started for the Continent in September 1846.

The interesting letters which follow reveal clearly his state of mind. They are very, even passionately, morbid in their view of life; but morbid thoughts necessarily accompany a struggle for spiritual existence. He was emerging from this gloom into clearer light, when he arrived at Heidelberg. There he took the pulpit for the English chaplain, and so deeply interested many of the men who heard him, that his six weeks' stay in this place led to a large correspondence afterwards; especially on the part of some Unitarians, who, struck by his tolerance and his consistent support of the great doctrine of the Church of England,

wished to hear more from him on the subject of their controversy.

XIV.

Cortina : September 24, 1846.

MY DEAR —,—I have a spare hour, and I cannot better employ it than by giving you a sketch of my proceedings. I shall pass over all till the time when I got to Innsbruck, where I arrived about five o'clock one glorious afternoon. It lies in a valley about two miles broad, and extending in length as far as the eye can reach. In the centre of this runs, or rather gushes, the Inn, on its way down to the Danube. From the heights above, about four hours before you reach Innsbruck, is a view which, in its way, I never saw equalled. A lovely plain studded with spires and villages, with none of the disadvantages of a plain, such, for instance, as is the plain of Gloucester, seen from Malvern, flat and wearisome. The background to this plain rises gigantic and abrupt, a long line of mountains, some of which, when I passed, were covered with recently fallen snow. Filled with all the disagreeable associations which belong to a twenty-six hours' drive in a dirty diligence, I cannot describe the revulsion of feeling which is experienced when this splendour breaks upon you, lighted up by the brilliancy of a sunny day. It shone everywhere, except on my heart. That night I wandered alone by the rush of the Inn, and gave myself up unreservedly to the spirit of the place. I love to do this always. I try to arrive at a place where I sleep in good time, that I may get my stroll, after I am quite refreshed, before the sun has set. Such a one I got last night at Brunecken, and such a one I got three years ago at the Grimsel, when I left my brothers in the Hospice and strolled out alone. That evening almost stands alone in my life. I shall never have such another—so solemn, so awful, so almost holy. That wild, savage scenery, made

more wild by storm-clouds which were just beginning to drift over the peaks above me, conveyed sensations which come only once in life. They say love comes only once. That is a sickly school-girl's fancy; but I do think nature, in all its mystery, is felt but once. Yesterday, and at Innsbruck, my feelings were not like those—not so sweet, not so happy. The sensation was one of *laissez aller*. Clouds were there, and rich purple and blackening mountains, and coming night—and my feeling was a kind of indifference which is not indifference. It was all drifting on—clouds, life, time—and I cared not how fast I drifted along with it. Crumbling mountains, valleys strewed with rocks and ruin, and all this shrouding itself fast in deepening darkness. I came back to another world of feeling—lighted streets, people crowding out from vespers, noise, hurry, and uproar. Two things in Innsbruck pleased me much : the Hofkirche, in which is Hofer's monument, and two singular lines of gigantic bronze figures, besides the finest tomb in Europe—Maximilian's—and the museum. In the latter is a complete collection of everything in the Tyrol—birds, vegetables, minerals, works of art, sculpture, and paintings by Tyrolese artists; and one compartment, as interesting as all the rest together, where lie Hofer's and Spechbacher's swords; some of the money coined when Hofer was governor of the Tyrol, his girdle, braces, sash, and a letter written for supplies. I drew his sword, and almost felt that it was done with a soldier's feeling.

Botzen : September 27.

I have been unable to finish this, from the impossibility of procuring legible ink in the mountain places where I have been the last few days. When at Innsbruck, I tried to get a shot at a chamois, and for this purpose engaged a jäger. We walked out one day to a distant place in the hills, where we slept. Next morning, at a little after four, the stars still shining brightly,

and the sky like midnight, we set off, and saw the sun rise gloriously an hour and a half afterwards. We climbed on and on for hours, watching the clouds curling beneath us and wreathing themselves in fantastic forms, as if the morning light were torturing them—on and on, through pine forest, and heath, and rocks, till at three o'clock we had reached our highest altitude; but not even the trace of a chamois did we see. By nine at night I got back, ravenously hungry, and prepared to make up for the sleepless hours of the preceding night; but I was well repaid by glorious views—which few Englishmen can have seen—of the valleys of the Stubay, and Sill, and Inn, lying far beneath us. The night before was a strange and painful one. I could not sleep. My companion had taken leave of me with the usual respectful salutation, after supping on trout and sour wine together, side by side—turning down my bed to see if the sheets were clean, &c., and all those traits of respectful independence which mark the lower orders here. For some hours, excitement kept me awake—excitement from the scenery I had just passed through, and the anticipations of the morrow to which I looked forward. That passed away, and still I could not sleep. Lassitude of heart came on—a strange, melancholy sinking of the spirit. Life rose before me like a thin shadow. I felt that past years had been one vast failure, and I looked on to future ones with a heart utterly adrift, wishing to be wiser than heretofore, practically wiser, but not knowing how. I was wide awake when the jäger came to summon me. Night after night has been like this—restless, whether I sleep or wake; and at five regularly I throw myself out in the dark to drive away the spectres. Take one single night as a specimen—the night before last. I dreamed that some one was telling me that all my friends were mourning over the deterioration of my sermons, &c.—their unintelligibility and emptiness.

I woke, went to sleep again, and then was arraigned for duties left undone—sick unvisited, schools untaught, &c., with a minuteness of detail—names I never heard of, &c.—all of which it would be childish to record. I only tell you my dreams, to show you the unresting, unaltering state of my heart. Change of scene, hard exercise, conversation with foreigners; all make no difference. But enough of this.

I set out on Monday last from Innsbruck with my knapsack, and walked across the Brenner, up the valley of the Sill, down the valley of the Eisach, turned off at Mittenwald, passed along the valley of the Rienz, threaded the pass of Ampezzo, and in three days and a half arrived at Cortina, within twenty-four hours of Venice. The pass of Ampezzo is glorious. The road winds through serrated and striking mountains, in one place under a glacier. It was a beautiful day when I passed, and I had the full enjoyment of it—at least the first half. After that, rain fell in torrents, and by the time I got to Cortina, I was drenched. But even this, I think, only enhanced the grandeur. Gleams from time to time revealed the more distant peaks, and the clouds curling curiously and wildly round the nearer ones, only made the thing more sublime. . . . Yesterday from a place called Castleruth, beautifully perched upon an eminence commanding views in every direction, and directly under one of the finest of the grand dolomite crags, I began to descend a most steep mountain down to Botzen. It was the hardest part of the whole walk—blistered me severely, wrung my ankle by a slip—but winds through scenery of enchanting beauty, till, at the foot, it leads by a single wooden arch thrown high across the Eisach into the road towards Botzen, twelve miles above it—the same road which I had quitted when I turned off at Mittenwald to the Passier Thal. Southern scenery was now making its appearance. Luxuriant trellised vines, pumpkins lying rich and yellow on the

ground, a more genial and almost sultry air told that the land of sunny skies was not far off. Botzen, more south than which I do not go, lies at the junction of two valleys, the vale of the Eisach and that of the Adige, and is surrounded by hills which overhang the town; vines and fig-trees, mulberries, pumpkins, &c., clothe their sides. To-day I met an English physician at table, who has lived twenty-five years in Bohemia—looks German, speaks English with hesitation—and from him I have got a good deal of information respecting the Tyrol and German authors. He says Jean Paul is despised—has no claim to the title of a thinker; that the first Germans look down on all the metaphysical school; and that the metaphysicians, almost to a man, are defective in character.

XV.

Hôtel du Prince Charles, Heidelberg:
October 24, 1846.

MY DEAR —,— Thank you for your affectionate and kind letter, which I received this morning, and which I hasten at once to answer. Yet I scarcely know how to answer it. I would not willingly conceal any part of my heart from you, yet I fear I could not intelligibly tell you all, though I can put it in very distinct English for myself. At least, set your mind at rest on one point. Whatever mental trials I may experience, you are not responsible for any. I have heard you state difficulties, but never argue for them; and the difficulties could not come upon my mind for the first time—of a man who had read theological and philosophical controversy—long before, with painful interest—a man, who, at different times, has lived in the atmosphere of thought in which Jonathan Edwards, Plato, Lucretius, Thomas Brown, Carlyle, Emerson, and Fichte lived—who has steeped his soul and memory in Byron's strong feelings—

who has walked with Newman years ago to the brink of an awful precipice, and chosen rather to look upon it calmly, and know the worst of the secrets of the darkness, than recoil with Newman, in fear and tenderness, back to the infallibility of Romanism. Such a man is not likely to have been influenced by a few casual statements of difficulties which he had read of a thousand times before. I knew well what the state of your mind *had* been. I thought I knew what it *is*, and therefore never, except in a walk once, in answer to a searching question, did I ever hint to you what was the attraction to my mind in such books. A man, as it has been well said, 'ought to burn his own smoke, if he cannot convert it into clear flame.' For this reason, I shall not enter upon these points, except superficially. I am quite sure that what you say is true about getting truth—at least truth enough—at last, and I am quite willing to struggle on in twilight until the light comes. True, manly struggle cannot fail. I know that. Only a man must struggle alone. His own view of truth, or rather his own way of viewing it, and that alone, will give him rest. He can only *adopt* the views of other minds for a time; and so long as his own is inert, the help that he gets directly from others generally does no good. Indirect, casual hints sometimes do much. I have never said so much as this to any one in England, and, of course, you will kindly not even hint it. Here, in Germany, I have conversed much and freely on the points of difficulty. I have found minds here that understand me if they cannot help me; and in the conviction that a treasure lies near me in German literature, I am digging away night and day at the superincumbent earth, in order hereafter to get at it. Indeed, I have already plunged into it, perhaps too suddenly, considering my rudimental acquaintance with the language. Some things I am certain of, and these are my *Ursachen*, which cannot be taken away from me.

I have got so far as this. Moral goodness and moral beauty are realities, lying at the basis, and beneath all forms of the best religious expressions. They are no dream, and they are not mere utilitarian conveniences. That suspicion was an agony once. It is passing away. After finding littleness where I expected nobleness, and impurity where I thought there was spotlessness, again and again I despaired of the reality of goodness. But in all *that* struggle, I am thankful to say, the bewilderment never told upon my conduct. In the thickest darkness, I tried to keep my eye on nobleness and goodness, even when I suspected they were only Will-o'-the-Wisps. Indeed, I startled an Epicurean philosopher some time ago, here in Germany, with the vehemence with which I maintained this. He was defending Goethe's views and life, and I poured out my indignation in such a storm of fury, that he quite cowered before the blast, and between seven and eight next morning anxiously begged me to believe that he had overstated his own views. I had rather be a Stoic in hell fire than an Epicurean on his principles, or Goethe's, if they be Goethe's. I am anxious to set you at rest upon this point, for really you are responsible for nothing. Indeed, a man must have been profoundly and incredibly ignorant of literature, if these things had presented themselves to him in a few conversations in a new light. As to the ministry, I am in infinite perplexity. To give it up seems throwing away the only opportunity of doing good in this short life that is now available to me. Yet to continue it, when my whole soul is struggling with meaning that I cannot make intelligible—when I am perpetually bewildering people, and saying the thing I do not mean—to go on teaching and preaching when my own heart is dark, and lacks the light I endeavour to impart—when I feel as if it lay upon me, like a destiny, to speak truth, and not as Cassandra, to be disbelieved, but to be for ever unin-

telligible to my brother man—is very wretched. . . .

I intend to spend the remainder of my time in Heidelberg. Several English families are here; some of them well-informed and agreeable people. Heidelberg is a lovely spot. When I first saw it, I thought it the loveliest I had ever beheld. But it was summer then, and I was five years younger. Moreover, I have seen the grandest scenery perhaps on earth since then. Still I admire it much, very much, and love to wander alone beside its winding river, especially at sunset, when the broad stream of yellow light streams along its whole length, almost from Mannheim to where I stand. The castle heights and labyrinths, and the walks on the hill above, are all full of beauty. And now, my dear —, farewell, and God bless you.

XVI.

Hatchett's Hotel, Piccadilly:
January 1, 1847.

MY DEAR —,—,—As to all you said about a creed, I never knew any sane man who doubted any part of what you urged upon me so warmly. That Christianity is true, that Christ's character is high, that to do good is better than to do wrong, I suppose, are axioms. But Paulus, even Strauss, would admit all this, and Socinians would demand a great deal more before they would call a man a Christian. Such points never seemed uncertain to me, except in moments of very bad dyspepsia, and then the dimness of the eye makes everything look black. But you will remember that this creed leaves all that we are accustomed to consider the essentials of Christianity, as distinguished from natural religion, undetermined. For instance, suppose a man puts the question, *Who* was Christ? What are miracles? What do you mean by inspiration? Is the resurrection a fact or a myth? What saves a man—his own character, or that

of another? Is the next life individual consciousness, or continuation of the consciousness of the universe? To these and twenty other questions which I could put, Krause would return one answer, Neander another, and Dr. Chalmers another; and I am certain that neither of the two last would be satisfied with even all that you urged as constituting Christianity—no, nor a great deal more in addition. Those are not points on which any man in health can suffer a doubt to last three-quarters of a second. And the questions I have mentioned, I mention not as perplexing myself (on that I say nothing), but as touching the real vitals of the question, which all you urge does *not* touch. But now to quit this subject. My mind is more under control than it was—my nerves braced by the surrender of Christchurch, and in proof of this, I mean to keep my weakness and wretchedness to myself, instead of plaguing my friends with them.

The following letters, though going over the same ground as the preceding, are kept separate from them and together, partly because they form a series, and partly because, being all written to one person—his wife, they are linked together by a unity of feeling.

Portions of them were submitted to the Editor's judgment, and they appeared so useful, as elucidating a remarkable time in Mr. Robertson's life, that Mrs. Robertson was requested to permit their insertion. Considering them as sacred to the dead, Mrs. Robertson was at first disinclined to allow them to be published, but, at last, unwilling to retain anything which could make her husband better known to the world which honoured him, she consented to the publication of the following extracts. In many ways they are extremely interesting. Those who will remember that they were written

at a time when, as I have said, he was passing through the great mental and spiritual crisis of his life, will look through them, and not in vain, for hints as to the drift of his thoughts, and the direction in which his spirit was developing itself. They exhibit also his delight in natural scenery, and the delicate way in which he observed it. His reverence and love for colour appear in his descriptions. The rapidity with which he made his 'course,' the determination and contempt of pain which carried him, in spite of a strained sinew in his ankle, over twenty-six miles of mountain walking, belong to and illustrate his character. It is curious to see, with all his professed love of loneliness, how fresh his interest was in all classes of society; how he enchanted the German counsellor; how he drew round him, with his customary magic of manner, the rough herdsmen of the Tyrol; how he charmed while he taught the English congregation at Heidelberg.

The two last letters, in which he expresses his disinclination to resume the work of his profession, need a slight comment. It is plain that that disinclination arose not so much from dislike to ministerial work in itself, as from his experience of ministerial work at *Cheltenham*. For we find him pleased and happy in his professional labours at Heidelberg. He had been misunderstood, rejected, and pained at Cheltenham; and his was not the stern nature which could receive and carelessly shake off a blow. With his natural incapability of selfish feeling, he believes that his so-called 'failure' at Cheltenham was his own fault. He thinks that he is not fit for work among the upper classes. But when I see him, in these letters, at Heidelberg—

emancipated, his own master—drawing round him the very class he believed himself unfit to teach—attracting, by the atoning influence he always exercised, both Unitarians and Swedenborgians to the Church of England—bringing young men to his feet, and awaking at once the intellect and the spirit of those who listened to him—I begin to see that it was the fault of the congregation rather than his own if his ministry was a failure at Cheltenham; and I am deeply thankful that God did not permit his servant to enter the hidden country parish he desired, but placed him where he should suffer more, and bear a sorer cross, but where also he was to be as a beacon set on a hill, whose light, warning, guiding, and inspiring, cannot be hid from men.

Patsch, near Innsbruck: Sept. 18, 1846.

I begin this letter from a small hamlet up high in the mountains near Innsbruck, where I intend to pass the night previous to an attempt to shoot a chamois. I have got a Tyrolese jäger or chasseur with me who knows the country well, and at half-past four to-morrow morning we begin our work. But as the chamois are very rare now, and to get at them is exceedingly difficult, I cannot say that I have much hopes of success.

We spent three days in Munich together, in seeing the different collections which it contains of sculpture and painting. There are a few splendid statues and pictures, especially some of Rubens, whom I admire more and more. Certainly his faults are glaring and visible to all; but his genius is that of a giant; and when a man has to play with mountains as if they were balls, you do not expect elegance in his limbs. From Munich to Innsbruck I travelled with a young Frenchman and two Italians, the one a cardinal and the other apparently his secretary. These two

spoke neither French nor German. We were much struck by seeing them for nearly an hour occupied in repeating the evening prayers from their breviaries. It seemed as if it would never be over. But the way in which they did it was exactly that of a schoolboy humming over his lessons. They corrected one another when a mistake was made, smiled, took snuff, opened the windows, shut them down, had a few words of conversation now and then by way of interlude—reminding me very strongly how inevitable a tendency there is in all forms, even the best, to lose all the spirit which once animated them, and become like lifeless corpses. No doubt those prayers were once the expression of true and fervid feeling. Now, a very cardinal can scarcely go through them without yawning.

For a stage or two from Munich the country was perfectly flat; but at length it began to put on the features of mountain scenery, till at Partenkirch it became really grand. Our road wound through mountains, till we began to descend the mountain chain which forms one side of the valley of the Inn. It is indeed a glorious prospect. The valley of the Inn is perfectly flat, about two miles broad, studded as far as the eye can reach in both directions with towns and villages, the spires of churches rising conspicuously at the interval of every five or six miles. This beautiful valley is bounded on both sides by alpine chains, rising steeply and often perpendicularly from the very side of the road. One mighty rock in particular we passed, which is called Martin's Wand. It rises a sheer precipice of 1,500 feet. It is celebrated for a wonderful escape of the Emperor Maximilian. He was out chamois-hunting, and in his eagerness fell and slipped down to the very verge of this descent. There, as the guide-book says, he hung with his head over, unable to move. He was seen from below, and the people issued from their cottages, headed by their bishop, who offered up

prayers for him as for a man at the point of death. At last a desperate outlaw, who was hunting in that direction, perceived him, came down a descent which seemed impracticable, bound crampons to his feet, and led him off safely in a way which was considered miraculous. We came to this spot, or rather just above it, when the sun was already low, and steeping the mountain sides in that peculiar purple tint which in alpine regions is so inexpressibly rich.

In all this glory there is a strange tumult in my bosom for which I cannot assign any cause. Grandeur makes me misanthropic, and soft beauty makes my heart beat with a misery that I cannot describe. In Retzsch's illustrations of Goethe's 'Faust' there is one plate where angels drop roses upon the demons who are contending for the soul of Faust. Every rose falls like molten metal, burning and blistering where it touches. It is so that loveliness does with me. It scorches when it ought to soothe. After my arrival at Innsbruck I wandered alone by the gush of that wild and roaring river. Everything was still and solemn. Mighty shadows were moving silently across the valley, like so many giant spectres, as the sun went down behind the hills. The outlines of the mountains gradually blended in a sky which became by degrees as black as themselves, and I was left in the grandeur of darkness. I felt, as I generally do on such occasions, strongly, the swift rush of time—on and on, bearing everything along with it into the Infinite; and here are we, for a moment, powerless nothings, but endowed with powers of agony and thought which none but immortals feel. Then I went slowly back to Innsbruck, heard the hum of life again, saw the windows glittering with light, heard the drone of the church bells, and met the crowds coming away from vespers. It all seemed a dream. Next day I devoted to seeing Innsbruck. My first attraction was the cathedral. In it is the statue of the celebrated Hofer. It represents Hofer in Tyrolese costume,

with his rifle, decorations, and a standard in his hand, crowned with laurel by the Goddess of Victory. But the court of Austria, in their aristocratic littleness, considered this part of the design too flattering to a peasant; and the monument stands now without the crown and goddess. As if God had not stamped upon Hofer's brow and heart a nobility of which crowns and titles are but the earthly shadow. The nobles of Austria will have their memory with the worms that eat them when Hofer's name is still high among the aristocracy of the universe.

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[The remainder of this letter describes the chamois hunt, but it is here omitted—a description of the same expedition having already been inserted.]

Brunecken : Sept. 23.

I proceed to take up the thread of my history where it last broke off, which was at Innsbruck, after my return from an unsuccessful chamois-hunt. I have now written three times; once from Frankfort, once by Mrs. Dalzell, and once from Innsbruck. I hope you got them all. On Monday last, the 21st, I set off on a pedestrian excursion alone.

I trudged on, very briskly at first, for the sun shone beautifully. Three hours from Innsbruck I came to Schönberg, from which there is a grand view of three valleys, terminating at this point. At night I slept at Stainach, a small village in the hills, at what in England would be called a pothouse. A motley assemblage was round me in the dining-room, peasants, travellers, servants, all dining at different tables. A figure of the Saviour, half as large as life, looked down on the noisy scene. * * * * The season in which we now are is very beautiful for walking. The fir woods in summer are sombre, from their having but one hue. Now there is a very beautiful contrast. There is the deep-green of the older foliage, a delicate light

green of this year's growth, and a rich orange of the trees intermixed with them which have now their autumn tint. This orange colour is in some places, where it is well sprinkled in irregular patches, superlatively fine. And now I will tell you my general impression of the Tyrol. So far as I have seen as yet, I have been rather disappointed in the people. I have found less simplicity; less politeness, and far less cleanliness than I expected. Religious they certainly are, if crosses and virgins almost at every quarter of a mile be a proof of religion. But I am inclined to believe that all this is looked upon by them in the light of a spell, and has much less influence on their moral conduct than is generally supposed. Moreover, in every inn there is holy water in your bed-room, and in the dining-room generally a figure of the Saviour; and at Mittenwald, under the figure, were some most touching sentences on life and death. But I never observed that this had any effect in solemnising the parties who sit beneath it. They are satisfied with being under protection, and drink, play at cards, smoke, in a way that to us seems incompatible with religious feeling. (And this I believe is the very essence of superstition—to feel great reverence for certain objects, visible or invisible, on account of some mysterious influence with which they are supposed to be endowed, but an influence which all the while has not necessarily any moral effect, or any connection with character.) It is quite curious how these chapels beset you at every step, and their number is increased by the erection of one in every place where a fatal accident has taken place. These seem to have been exceedingly frequent, and the rude delineations of the circumstance, a man frozen to death, drowned, buried by an avalanche, &c., is in desolate districts very solemn and affecting. The sound of bells, too, in these Alps is a very peculiar feature.

Cortina, or Ampezzo: September 24.

To-day I had the finest walk of all, in-

deed the only one that has approached grandeur. The pass of Ampezzo, the shortest between Innsbruck and Venice, is remarkably wild and noble. The shape of the mountains, as well as their height, adds to this grandeur. They are peaked, serrated, and jagged in all directions. After the somewhat tiresome, because unaltering, scenery through which I had gone, this sudden view brought new sensations, and sent the blood thrilling to the heart, and then running about in all directions, not knowing where to go. After getting about half through, it came on to rain, a drenching shower, for two hours. But this scarcely diminished the beauty of the scene, for gleams of sunshine every now and then revealed unseen peaks through the rain, and the clouds drifting in masses round the peaks, now dipping down, and now leaving all bare, formed a picture exceedingly striking. Few things are more interesting than the way in which clouds group themselves in these regions. Sometimes they seem to hold fast to a mountain peak by a comparatively narrow base, while the rest of the vapoury mass soars up and up, widening as it goes, to a height of which you only form a conception by comparing it with the lofty mountain, which does not reach one-fourth of the distance.

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Corfara: September 25.

This morning, at an early hour, I turned off from Cortina, which is on the road to Venice, and struck across the hills to this place. Very few English, so far as I can find, have ever come this way. The walk was in some places very grand. I passed castellated pinnacles, covered with snow which fell last night, ruined forests, fir-trees stripped of their bark and cast headlong by avalanches from the heights above—a castle in ruins, which once belonged to the Bishops of Brixen, and contained the retinue of the commander of this district. Though only thirty years have passed since it was inhabited, it is now in ruins, over-

grown with ivy, and huge masses of the ruin lie detached, with several young trees, thirty feet high, growing on them. The more massive a human work is, the more calculated apparently to defy the encroachments of time, the more signally, and I think the more solemnly, at last does it show the triumph of the conqueror. An hour more brought us up another ascent to Piève d'Andraz, where my companion, who was an actuary of the Landgericht, or Tyrolese Court of Justice, had to stay on his duties. After being parted for a little time, I thought when we met again that he would have kissed me for joy. Just before we arrived at Piève d'Andraz we had a glorious prospect. Monte Civita, with a hundred peaks, lay to my left, at about five miles' distance, closing up the loveliest valley I ever saw, through which a stream runs that divides Italy from the Tyrol. Before me, between two closer peaks, lay Monte Marmoletta, his head clothed in eternal snow, and his waist braced with glaciers; and just to the left the little village of Piève, to which I was going, with its spire and twelve houses. To-morrow, all day, if I can move at least,* I will go through the haunts of this people. I am now writing in the stove-room, public room, or whatever it is to be called, the only sitting-room in the cottage, surrounded by shepherds who have come in wet through, and are discussing their supper and their sour wine—a new scene of life; but I am more at home with them than in Cheltenham. My guide is supping with me—an honest modest Italian—on some dish whose composition I cannot guess, and dare not ask.

Botzen: September 27, Kaiserkrone Hotel.

I have just finished a letter to you, but still I must begin another, that I may put down my impressions while they are fresh. For I feel strongly that, in this world, things can be felt but once; you cannot recall impressions. You recall only part

* He had severely strained a sinew in his ankle.

of them, softened and altered, bearing the same relation to the impression itself that the mellowed Italian does to the original Latin. Pictures, scenery, persons, you can feel them in this world but once. The first time never returns. So I write now, that whatever I have to say may be fresh and living. Memory retains things, but only as a herbarium holds plants; they become colourless and withered after a time, retaining only the shape of what they were, and even that distorted. I closed my last letter at Corfara, after getting in drenched and half frozen to a miserable little inn, resorted to by the shepherds when their day's work is done. Twenty or more sat at tables round me, redolent of garlic, sheep, and tobacco. I make it a duty to feel myself at home in every society—so I pushed half my supper across to one of them, to his evident surprise, and afterwards spread out my map, when the whole party crowded round me, and I delighted them by pointing out to each his native valley or village. A little after five next morning I threw myself out of bed. The sky was just light enough for me to see that the clouds were gone; and by the time I was dressed, and had packed up my knapsack, the prelude to a brilliant day had begun. I set out with a man to carry my knapsack, for I had a journey before me which all told me was impossible; but, as it was Saturday, I determined to reach Botzen, the nearest town, and not spend Sunday in the cold mountains. Snow had fallen the night before, and our path was slippery, up hill and steep, and by the time we got to Castleruth, my guide was done up. So I took the knapsack on my own shoulders, and pushed on down a most steep mountain, which fatigued me more than the ascent, and reached Botzen before nine in the evening. The valley through which I passed is a very remarkable one. In it are mountains of dolomite, peculiar from the sharpness and ruggedness of their peaks, being cleft by thousands of deep fissures, perfectly bare, and rising up in all manner

of fantastic forms. It was a glorious day all through, and the sun glittered against the white dolomite crags as if they had been silver. A Tyrolese valley on a sunny day, sleeping in the light and rich tints, is exquisitely beautiful. Above Castleruth I paused to look down upon the village below. It lay some miles before me, deep down, but still far higher than Botzen to which I was going. A rich deep autumn tint covered all the undulations and woods and meadows, and the massy peaks, rearing themselves out of it in strange contrast, enhanced the loveliness of the whole. From Castleruth the way was steep, so that it could only be descended by small zigzags, till I came to a bridge thrown by a single arch of wood over the Eisach into the road which I quitted some days ago at Mittenwald. I now re-entered it twelve miles above Botzen. By this time the scenery had somewhat changed its character. Vines, which I had not seen for a fortnight, festooned themselves in rich profusion over trelliswork. Rich yellow pumpkins lay delicious-looking on the ground, and the whole aspect of the country announced that I was near the land of cloudless skies.

At the table-d'hôte here I met with an Englishman—the first I have seen for many days. He has been fifteen years in Germany—has married a German lady, and is settled on the Elbe in Bohemia.

September 28.

To day, instead of going on as I had intended, I made an excursion with Mr. — to the summit of the Mindola Mountain, the foot of which is about eight miles from hence. We started at half-past six a.m., and got back by eight at night. The day, which at first promised to be cloudy, became bright as time passed on; and by the time we were at the top, every distant peak was clear. The view from the top was a noble one. The Valley of the Adige lay stretched before us, nearly as far as Meran to the left, down towards Trent to the right, and in the centre the broad opening of the three valleys with the junction of

the Adige and Eisach just above Botzen; which seemed close beneath us. In the distance beyond the valley towered up the dolomite mountains which I passed on Saturday, together with many others which I had not before seen: three lakes lay below me, with villages and innumerable houses spreading the valley and hill sides. My opinion of Tyrolese character is much lowered. Their virtues are primitive, certainly, the virtues of human nature without principle; such as all people have who live scattered, and are not subjected to those allurements which come from the congregation of numbers, from trade and polished life. They are hospitable, simple, honest; but this only so long as they have no temptation to be otherwise. As soon as a valley has become the resort of travellers, and traffic has of course increased, they become as knowing and extortionate as the inhabitants of any country. They are said to be very religious, and if chapels, crosses, masses, prayers without end, constitute religion, certainly they are. But their religion seems only a spell or charm, valuable to keep them safe from danger; and I call that not religion but cowardice. There is a picture in the gallery at Munich, of which you see many engravings throughout the country, representing a priest and boy attacked by brigands. The priest holds up to their gaze the host, while the boy raises a lamp to let the light fall upon it. The robbers cower down and relax their grasp upon their victims, awed by the mysterious symbols of religion. This is called the triumph of faith. It conveys exactly my present notion of the religion of the Tyrolese. I do not call that faith—it is paltry, abject cowardice. There are men who would rob and murder; but because a mystery is held before them, which may strike them dead, they tremble, and give up the enterprise. It is very necessary to make this distinction, because Newman and his party have introduced a language now popular, according to which religion consists in awe and veneration. The more

of these you have, the more religious you are. But these are only religious feelings if they are felt for true objects. A man who crouches before a crucifix, or trembles before the sacrament, and does not bow his whole heart in adoration of the good, the holy, the true, is not religious, but superstitious. They want to show that superstition in itself is good. I say, superstition has no religious element in it at all. It is all cowardice. And a man who walks into a church with his hat on his head, breaks images remorselessly to pieces, tosses consecrated bread out of the window, or treads it under foot, and yet prostrates his heart to goodness and nobleness, loving, honouring and cultivating all that, is the man in whom awe and reverence have their right places, though foolish people would call him irreverent.

You cannot conceive how England is detested throughout Germany. The 'Allgemeine Zeitung,' the leading newspaper, is perpetually attacking us—our behaviour in India, our religious hypocrisy, our slavery to forms and fashions, our commercial policy, &c. A short time ago the 'Times' had, in some article, remarked upon the great advantage derived by Germany from the English travellers who pass through it. Upon which the 'Zeitung' replied, that if a few innkeepers rejoiced at this, the whole nation mourned. 'Only let God deliver us from the affliction of that horrid nation passing through our towns and besetting us like a plague of flies in our diligences, hotels, walks, with their stupid faces, their vulgarity, their everlasting inquisitiveness about hotels and sight-seeing, and utter inability to appreciate anything higher, and it would be a day of jubilee for all Germany.' I do not give the words, but that was the purport of the article. The Baroness gave me a letter to an Augustinian priest living in Meran, the author of the best guide to the Tyrol, who has explored himself every corner of it, in order that I might ascertain from him whether it would be dangerous at this

late season of the year to cross the glaciers with crampons on the feet into the Oetz Thal. He received me very courteously in a room most plainly furnished, containing little more than a table covered with books and writing materials, and a few chairs. A bedroom which I saw through an open door, was equally simple, no carpet, no curtains. He told me he thought I might venture with a guide by one path that he pointed out. Accordingly, this morning at six o'clock I set out, the first four hours of my path lying on the high road to Innsbruck. But it soon came on to rain heavily, and I reached this hole of a place by nine o'clock, drenched through once more, the clouds hanging round me so low and dense that it would have been absurd to proceed further. Ah! well, I suppose I must give up the grand glaciers. Six months hence what will it matter? And, after all, I do the whole of this more as a duty than because I can produce any real emotion of interest in my heart. I hold it a duty to see what can be done by the bracing up of my nervous system, and one mountain is almost as good as another for that. As soon as the fine weather sets in in earnest I turn north, and shall settle in some German place where I can get on a little with the language, for here without books I can do nothing. What I do learn by conversation is but provincialisms and patois.

Innsbruck : Oct. 8.

Here I am again, my pedestrian excursion being over. And now, to take up the thread where it last broke off. I had reached the top of the Stelvio, just after wading ankle deep through snow and slush, up the most wonderful road in Europe. As usual, I did it fast, accomplishing in six hours and a half what a man in the hotel-book boasted to have done in nine; nay, four miles more—for he started from Prad, and I had a full hour's work to get to Prad. When I got to the very summit, faint with exertion, the

clouds hid the grand view from me; and I went on for an hour more of descent, to a single house on the bleak mountain side, which is at once the custom-house and an hotel—a massive building, of enormous stones, built to keep off the avalanches, if possible. In this lofty spot I got tolerable accommodation. As I had missed the grand view from the summit, I went back next morning so far to try my chance again, through snow which had fallen in the night as deep as my knee, and on drifts deeper than the hip. But a grand sight awaited me at the top: the sun shining on the magnificent Orteler Spitze, whose peak of snow glittered in brilliant contrast to the bare bleak rocks of his sides, down which, as if in streams, his glaciers, glittering brightly too, descended into the valley. I had a curious series of manœuvres to get rid of an oily, stupid Italian. What a relief it was! I cannot tell you how the love of solitude has grown upon me. I can enjoy these mountains, with their sombre pine woods and their wild sights and sounds, only when I am alone. Rocks and crags crumbling down in a long line of ruin; uprooted trees hurled headlong, bark and branches gone, and their black stumps dotting the mountain far above, where they were before the avalanche or the torrent reached them; wild birds soaring and shrieking as you pass along, disturbed perhaps from their feast on a dead horse; the clouds sailing solemnly in long white lines above, or wreathing themselves like living shrouds round the crags. There is grandeur and wonder in all these things; but the spell is broken if human beings are near you. I spent Sunday at Nauders—a delightful spot, close to the Pass of Finstermünz. After dinner I strolled down to the Finstermünz Pass—about an hour's walk—that I might see as much of it as possible, though I had to walk through it again on Monday on my way. I was disappointed. The Stelvio is more wonderful, and more grand too. It is a narrow cleft in the mountain, through which the River

Inn gushes on its way to Innsbruck. The cliffs on each side rise steep and precipitous, leaving only room for the stream and the road by its side. The descent to it from Nauders is very rapid, which adds to the grandeur. The Inn roars and thunders through it, and I took pleasure in watching the fir-tree stumps, which are cut by the woodmen above in certain lengths, and then committed to the stream to be carried down to the valleys. Some pieces stemmed all falls and projecting points gallantly; others sunk for a time, and then you saw them emerging below, conquerors out of trial. Some were stranded, and left high and dry upon the bank, or on rocks in the centre of the stream; others had got out of the current, and were carried round a projecting point into still water, either stationary, or floating slowly back instead of on, as if there had been a destiny before them, and that destiny unfulfilled; while others beside them, not their superiors in activity or strength, were steadily buffeting their way forwards and home. What an image of life! Two days more brought me to Innsbruck, through fine scenery, by the side of the Inn all the way.

Schaffhausen: Oct. 11.

I have taken my path through Switzerland, and pass to-day, Sunday, here. The hotel is about two miles from the town, and just opposite the Falls of the Rhine. I was disappointed at the first view from this place, as it is higher than the river, and half a mile from the Fall, which looks insignificant. The river turns at right angles by the Fall, and opposite exactly is Weber's hotel. Yesterday, after arriving, I went down to the water's edge, crossed where you see the dotted line, and got exactly beside the Fall, midway between the top and bottom. Here is far the finest view—the only spot where you can understand and take in its grandeur. You see the mighty river above, a sheet of glass, pouring over the ledge, as if it would overwhelm you. The next moment it flashes past you like lightning, convulsed into a sea

of foam, and loses itself below in a cloud of spray, which rises eighty feet at least in height. In this spray an iris, delicately beautiful, was visible, rising out of the very depths below, and arching itself up twenty feet above the highest level of the water. In the centre of the Fall two tall rocks rear themselves out of the froth, the river thundering and foaming down their sides. To the foot of one of these I got the boatmen to row me, through the foam under the Fall, and, after some tossing, landed, climbed up a slippery path to the top, and sat there, the Fall being above and below me, and on both sides; but this view is not equal to the side one. On a near view I felt the full magnificence of the Fall. The blending of the colours was very singular. In places the lights on the descending waters were of a lovely grass-green, while the shadows were warm, almost purple. The full height is seventy feet; but this is lessened by the descent being made partially over a declivity of irregular ledges before the grand leap is taken. The snow mountains of the Bernese Oberland extend themselves in long line opposite the window of the room in which I write. My heart bounds at the unexpected sight, and I am half tempted to set off in that direction tomorrow. The weather has once more become warm and lovely, so different from the bleak weather I had in the Tyrol; and if it were only one week earlier in the year, I certainly should go. The well-known form of the Jungfrau cuts into the clear sky, white and sharp, with that peculiar outline which you only see in this clear atmosphere—looking, indeed, as if there were no intermediate atmosphere. Last night I sat up long in my bed-room, unable to get to sleep, watching the Fall of the Rhine by moonlight. The pale beams fell beautifully on the white foam, making the dark rocks darker still by contrast. The spray rose up, floating like thinnest silver tissue; and the incessant roar of the falling water, softened by the distance into a murmur like that

of a forest shaking in the wind, might have served for a soldier's dirge or a poet's lullaby. It was singularly solemn: stars silent and clear above, looking out of a sky of infinite blue; no wind, no cloud, and the stone statues on the terrace below (something like our own dear terrace at Aix-les-Bains), glittering cold and white, like spectres, gazing on the convulsion of the Rhine beneath them. An English family and myself are alone in this great hotel, yet I have not offered to perform the service for them. I cannot. Even to read prayers seems an effort beyond my power. More and more I feel that I am not a minister, and never can be one. Exercise has not braced my nerves, nor destroyed the phantoms, if they be phantoms, which rise before me. So long as I am awake, I can keep unpleasant thoughts away; but directly I sleep, the power of banishing them is gone. I sleep but little; yet that is no gain, for my half-waking dreams are worst.

Heidelberg: Oct 13 (Tuesday).

Here I am at last, having exactly carried out all my intentions to the letter; and here I think I shall stay for some weeks at least, as living is tolerably reasonable, and there are but few English. Moreover, the scenery is perhaps the most beautiful which this part of Germany affords. The views in all directions are fine up and down the river, and the ruins of the old Castle are always a delightful place to wander in. I was much tempted to make an excursion in Switzerland, especially the evening before I came away from Schaffhausen. I never saw a scene more lovely than that which presented itself from the terrace before the hotel. The evening was cloudless, the air peculiarly still and clear, and the long range of snow mountains in the Bernese Oberland, Glarus, &c. as distinct almost as the Malvern Hills. A glorious sunset lighted them up with a rich glow, which by degrees subsided into a delicate rose blush, and then a minute after the snow was left opaque and cold. I cannot

describe the effect of this singular transition. The paleness of the snow is quite of a livid hue, like the colour of a corpse, and gave me a very strange sensation—almost a shudder. The beauty of this spectacle filled me with the wish for enterprise, and I walked into Schaffhausen, two miles from the hotel, to inquire the hours of the diligences to Zurich. However, an old guide who was in the hotel, when I spoke to him of the beauty of the weather, drily shook his head, and said, 'Nein; I have been a guide twenty-five years. Take my word for it, it is going to rain.' At this moment not a cloud was to be seen; but a little after midnight the rain was falling from a sky without a star, and the dawn broke upon a desolate and dreary prospect of mud and puddles.

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Hôtel du Prince Charles, Heidelberg :
November 11.

I have at last decided upon my course with respect to Christchurch. You were perfectly right, I was most unwise to bare my feelings even to the extent I did. A man who 'wears his heart upon his sleeve' must not be surprised if he finds it a temptation 'for daws to peck at.' That I said as much as I did to any human being, I now deeply regret. But I shall go on doing so to the end of the chapter. Sympathy is too exquisitely dear to me to resist the temptation of expecting it; and then I could bite my tongue with vexation, for having babbled out truths too sincere and childlike to be intelligible. But as soon as the fit of misanthropy is past, that absurd human heart with which I live trusts and confides again—and so I go on alternately, rich and bankrupt in feeling. Yet, yet, say what I will—when any one soothes me with the semblance of sympathy—I cannot for the life of me help baring my whole bosom in gratitude and trust. A very expensive, perhaps a generous, but certainly a very weak way of giving lessons in anatomy gratis—vivisection performed by the lecturer upon himself Mr. —— has

mistaken me. He thinks I am disinclined to the work of active good towards my fellow-creatures. God knows it is the only one wish I have on earth to know *how* to do it; and I am sure I set heart and soul to work, till I found that I was at work the wrong way; and I do not see that it is very wise to go on pouring water into reservoirs when you find that there are holes out of which it runs as fast as you pour. The Danaïdes did that; but the Danaïdes were in hell. I shall now take my own course, and permit advice from no one. I have given up Christchurch, and now the question is, what is to be the next step? I have two or three plans. The only one I shall mention at present, as the one that I think I shall try first, is, not to give up the ministry, but to make the experiment of working in a country parish, in which I have to deal with the poor only. For the rich I am neither mentally nor morally qualified. There is something either in my manner, language, or tone of thought which they will not brook; and then I have not calmness of nerve or meekness enough to prevent being agitated, and treating this in return with pride and coldness. In this way ministerial work is not likely to get on. But I am not yet *certain* that I could do nothing with the poor. If I had the work to myself, and could carry out my own plans, I have still a lingering hope that I could go on cheerfully, and not unsuccessfully. Will you ask my father if he would kindly be on the look-out for something of this sort, that I may stay in Cheltenham after my return as short a time as possible? I should not like more than a thousand people, at the very utmost. A house would be desirable. I should prefer agricultural poor, and a non-resident rector. Such things are perpetually offering themselves, and there is no need to be in a hurry. My mind has gone through a complete revolution in many things; I am resolved now to act, and feel, and think alone; your letter and others have completely determined me.

My life goes on here as usual; I am asked

out a great deal, almost always in a family way, and have become very intimate with some families. I preach every Sunday. People have come to church who had for long absented themselves. Some Socinians, too, go whenever I preach, so that my absence from England may not be altogether useless; yet I am not, and never shall be, at my ease with the upper classes.

Hôtel du Prince Charles, Heidelberg :
November 30.

I propose to leave Heidelberg in about a week or ten days from the present time, so that after the receipt of this letter it will not be of any use to write to me. This morning my father's letter arrived, by which I find he is already on the look-out for a curacy. I confess I feel strangely disinclined to work again. A feeling so gloomy and desolate appears to rest upon my heart when I think of the rudgery and apparent fruitlessness of my ministerial career, that I can hardly make up my mind to believe that I am really about to make the attempt again. It will, I fear, be only an attempt; and the last, if it should result in failure. What makes it seem more dreary is, that I have found a home and extraordinary kindness among the congregation here; and in less than two months a warmer union has grown up between us than I have had in Cheltenham after a residence of some years. To-day I mentioned my resolve, and I cannot tell you how I have been touched by the unfeigned regret which has been exhibited. I have had more proofs of my ministry telling here already than during my whole stay in Cheltenham. One family brought over a whole library of Swedenborg's books. They have, it appears, not opened them since I came, and have voluntarily promised not to study them any more. A Socinian confessed that the heart's *want* of the atonement had suggested itself to her strongly. And three young men of high talent, Socinians, come regularly, and listen with the deepest attention. All this is encouraging. It has brightened my stay

here much, but it has made the return very painful. I wish I could have so arranged that we could have passed the winter here. However, this is now out of the question, and I must make up my mind calmly and fairly to make the experiment of work once more, if I can. But I shall be able to judge of this better when I get back to England. Since I wrote the above I have been much tried by the unexpected warmth with which the congregation here have testified their regard at my departure. Two young thoughtful Socinians came in tears, and told me it would be the quenching of their spiritual life. A Socinian lady wept bitterly. Two more have been in tears this very evening, warmly urging me to stay. A French gentleman has been equally urgent, and two more families have argued for hours. I may say it to you, the request that I should remain has been unanimous. And yet I feel, on looking over the past, that all this bright sky would be clouded over once more, excited hope would end in failure. They have strangely overrated me, and I know that I could not fulfil their anticipations. Then to feel estrangement again, to see suspicion awaken, misunderstandings arise, and to give up another congregation in bitterness, would be too much to bear. Reluctantly, and with feelings strongly inclined to stay, I have all but decided not to comply with their request. Friday—I have been again greatly tempted to reconsider the question. There is a congregation earnestly wishing me to remain, not from popular preaching, but because they think they are getting good spiritually and morally. Individuals among them have been roused, and say out plainly that they are anxious not to be deserted in this crisis of their mental history—that Heidelberg would be no longer the same, in the event of their losing their weekly instruction. Is this a call from God or not? Then, on the other hand, the emolument would be very trifling—though Heidelberg is cheaper to live in than England. I should lose the time I remain

here in English work, though I should gain in mental education. Now balance all these things together, and tell me what you think, and also what my father thinks.

CHAPTER IV.

OXFORD.

Return to Cheltenham—Surrender of Curacy of Christchurch—He accepts the Charge of St. Ebbe's, Oxford—Position in Relation to the High Church and the Evangelical Parties—Results of his Work on the Parish of St. Ebbe's. and on himself—Trinity Chapel, Brighton, is offered to him—He refuses, but afterwards accepts the Offer—Sad Presentiments.

AFTER an absence of nearly three months, Mr. Robertson returned to Cheltenham. He had during his stay at Heidelberg surrendered the curacy of Christchurch with feelings of unmixed pain.

My father (he writes from Cheltenham, March 2, 1847) showed me your letter to him containing an inquiry respecting my health, and I answer it in his stead. I have been very unwell, thoroughly done up, mentally and bodily. I wandered six weeks in the Tyrol alone, trying the effect of mountain air and hard exercise. After that, I spent about nine weeks at Heidelberg, where I took the duty, got much interested in and attached to the congregation, studied Goethe, Schiller, and Krause, and got back something like calmness and health again.

I am now well, but idle and useless. I have given up the curacy of Christchurch. If I take work, it must be single-handed. I am afraid I can no longer brook to walk in leading-strings; but, however, enough of this.

As his health increased and his mind recovered from the tempest which had swept over it, he began to be impatient for some labour. The Bishop of Calcutta offered him a chaplaincy in his diocese, with the promise of a canonry, but he did not wish to leave home. He then wrote to the Bishop of Oxford, with whom, as Archdeacon Wilberforce, he had been acquainted at

Winchester, placed himself at his lordship's disposal, and asked for some employment.

The bishop at once offered him the charge of St. Ebbe's, Oxford. The church was situated in one of the worst parts of the town. The parish had not been regularly worked for some time, owing to the severe illness of the incumbent. It was a difficult post, and the emolument was very small. Mr. Robertson hesitated before accepting it, not on account of the disadvantages, but because of his disagreement with the known views of the Bishop of Oxford.

Before my son (writes Captain Robertson) went to St. Ebbe's, he saw the bishop in London, and frankly told him that he did not hold, and therefore could not preach, the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. The bishop replied, 'I give my clergy a large circle to work in, and if they do not step beyond that, I do not interfere. I shall be glad, however, to hear your views on the subject.' An hour's conversation followed, and at the close his lordship said, 'Well, Mr. Robertson, you have well maintained your position, and I renew my offer.' It was at once accepted.

From his connection with the Bishop of Oxford, it has been hinted that Mr. Robertson sympathised at this time with the views of the High Church party. It may be well here to set that

question at rest. He had no sympathy with their views ; but he had a great deal of sympathy with the men who held them, with their self-devotion, and with their writings. He revered the self-sacrificing work which they were performing among poor and neglected parishes. He said that, as a body, they had reassented the doctrine of a spiritual resurrection, which had been almost put out of sight by the 'Evangelical' party. He read Newman's sermons with profit and delight till the day of his death. There was no book which he studied more carefully or held in higher honour than the 'Christian Year.' It seemed to him that some of its poems were little short of inspiration. He saw in the importance which the Tractarians gave to forms a valuable element which he never lost sight of in his teaching. Only, while they seemed to say that forms could produce life, he said that forms were necessary only to support life ; but for that they were necessary. To use his own illustration : bread will not create life, but life cannot be kept up without bread. On the subject of Baptism, he felt no sympathy with the Evangelical view, which left it doubtful whether the baptized child was a child of God or not ; but because the Tractarian view declared that all *baptized* persons were children of God, he could so far sympathise with it. But on all other points, starting as he did from the basis that Baptism declared and did not create the *fact* of sonship, his difference was radical. The persecution, too, which this party suffered, secured his sympathy. He even believed that it had received but scant justice from one with whom he largely agreed. He maintained that Dr. Arnold did not stand quite impar-

tially between the Evangelicals and Tractarians, but judged the former less severely than the latter. On the other hand, it must be said that he himself showed but scant justice to the Evangelical party. He seems to have imputed to all its adherents the views of the *Record* newspaper. He sometimes forces conclusions upon them which the great body of them would repudiate. He overstates, unconsciously, some of their opinions. If there was any intolerance in his nature it oozed out here. But surrounded as he was by them at Brighton ; constantly attacked, by some manfully, by others in an underhand manner ; the victim of innuendos and slander, it was difficult for him always to be smooth-tongued. Nor was he now or afterwards the leader or the servant of any party in the Church. He stood alone. He fought out his principles alone. He has been called a follower of Mr. Maurice ; but though holding Mr. Maurice in veneration, he differed on many and important points from both him and Professor Kingsley. He was the child of no theological father. At this time, however, when a new impulse had come upon his life—when he was unshackled by a subordinate position—he was least of all thinking of party opposition or party teaching. One was his Captain, even Christ ; and he did not care, provided he fought under Him the good fight, what regiment he belonged to. All were his brothers in arms who were loyal to his Master's cause. He was ready, under great worldly disadvantages, to lead the forlorn hope which the bishop offered him. He did not accept it with any bright expectations. His experience, as he states in the following letter, had been very painful :—

Cheltenham : May 3, 1847.

I have just accepted St. Ebbe's, Oxford (offered by the bishop), after once refusing it. But as he seemed desirous I should take it, I consented, though reluctantly. It is a forlorn hope, I fear, and the stipend is miserable : . . . and altogether I feel depressed at the prospect of a residence in Oxford, with its cold, formal, forbidding conventionalisms. But for the present it seems the path of duty, and I am prepared to give it a fair trial. Nor do I ever expect to find the line of duty—lying, as it does, up the hill, with the cross at the top of it—a pleasant path.

. . . I have lately, as I told you, given up Christchurch here with feelings of inexpressible pain. A ministry of twilight, at the best, and difficulty, has closed. Every effort has been crowned with the most signal failure, and I shrink sometimes almost in torture from the idea of beginning work again, with the possibility of five such years once before me. This is not an encouraging tone of mind to begin a ministry with, so beset with difficulties as St. Ebbe's. However, as I certainly have no earthly inducement to take it, perhaps the work may be blest, even though mine.

In appearance at least, that work was blest. The place entirely yielded to him. The usual attendants of the church, as well as the rough and poor people of the parish, among whom he laboured faithfully, made themselves over to him at once. The undergraduates, a sensitive touchstone of a man's worth, dropped in one by one at first, and then rushed to hear him in crowds.* 'Every Sunday,' says a friend who visited him at Oxford, 'the church was thronged with these young

* The *Saturday Review* has entered into an elaborate argument to prove the impossibility of this. I can only say that I am not responsible for the account. It was told to me by an eye-witness, who may have exaggerated what he saw.

men, who hung breathlessly on every word he uttered.' Here, then, for the first time, he began to make himself felt, and to feel what he could do. Here, for the first time, he was entirely free; able to say, without opposition from without, without a shadow of inward restraint, the thing in his own heart. Here, too, for the first time, perhaps, he rested firmly on principles which he had secured at the price of a terrible spiritual contest. He became more peaceful. The dark shadow of failure began to pass away. But he was ill at ease; life lay upon him very heavily; it seemed, do what he might, that he could not be happy.

It was now that, after two months of work at St. Ebbe's, Trinity Chapel, Brighton, vacant by the retirement of Mr. Kennaway, was offered to him. He refused it at once.

He thought it would be a discourtesy to the bishop, and a failure in manly duty, to surrender St. Ebbe's. The material advantages he would gain made him suspicious of himself. The following letter gives the further history of this transaction, exhibits the self-sacrificing spirit which inspired his life, and will close this brief record of his Oxford ministry:—

Oxford : July 3, 1847.

My plans, as you are rightly informed, are altered, and I am only waiting till the bishop can release me by sending a substitute to go to Brighton. I refused Trinity at first distinctly; but after a day or two a letter came expressing the regret of the trustees, Rev. James Anderson, Lord Teignmouth, and Mr. Thornton, at my decision, and asking me to reconsider it. At the same time they enclosed a letter from the Bishop of Oxford, in answer to a request from them, which gave them permission to open the negotiation again, by releasing me,

if I wished, from my engagement. I should tell you that this letter came just as I was in great perplexity about certain difficulties which had arisen in the way of a residence in Oxford, and singularly coincidental in point of time. I therefore referred it to the bishop's decision, asking his opinion; not as to what he would like, for I knew he would wish me to keep Oxford; nor as to what would be most advantageous to me, for 300*l.* a year is better than 115*l.*, but what he thought my duty: considering the sphere of usefulness apparent in Oxford, and the drawbacks in a watering-place ministry, such as temptations to vanity, the improbability of influencing character deeply, &c. He replied that he thought it my duty to accept Trinity, so I go reluctantly. . . . I much, deeply regret that difficulties have prevented my remaining. So grand an opening for important, but not

glittering usefulness, I shall probably never have again. However, I believe, if I can read my own heart, that I have acted honestly. I am sure I go to a place from which I shrink, and with small hope and much misgiving.

However, I will try to do my work. My life, if I may judge by the decline of mental accuracy and strength, and the weakening of nerve, has got more than half way, and the rest is down-hill. The half-way house is behind: and if Brighton be another form of Cheltenham, home cannot be very far off. I am getting tired. And the complexion of my spontaneous thoughts now is the increasing contemplation of rest. Rest in God and Love. Deep repose in that still country where the mystery of this strange life is solved, and the most feverish heart lays down its load at last.

CHAPTER V.

BRIGHTON—1847, 1848.

Arrival at Brighton—Trinity Chapel—Death of his Infant Daughter—Self-analysis and Resolutions on entering on his Ministry at Brighton—First Sermon—Characteristics of his Teaching—Rapid Increase of his Congregation—Appreciated by Servants and Working Men—Wide Sphere of Work at Brighton—The Questions raised by the Revolutions of 1848, and how he met them—Afternoon Lectures on the First Book of Samuel—Results of these Lectures—Foundation of the Working Man's Institute—He is asked to Deliver the Opening Lecture—His Answer, and his Opinions on the Institution—Delivery of the First Address—His boldness of Speech—Endeavour to Reconcile Rich and Poor—Qualifications which fitted him to be a Mediator.

Letters from August 9, 1847, to January 5, 1849.

In the August of 1847 Mr. Robertson came to Brighton. The short period during which he had preached at Oxford was the pause which always occurs after a revolution of thought, before the new ideas have gained sufficient strength and roundness to be used with ease. At Oxford he was like the swimmer who has for the first time ventured into deep water; at Brighton he struck out boldly into the open sea. There was no hesitation, no reticence in his teaching. In the silence and solitude of the

mountains of the Tyrol, his 'soul, left to explore its own recesses, and to feel its nothingness in the presence of the Infinite,' had fixed its foundations deep and sure. From henceforward, his religious convictions never wavered, and the principles of his teaching never changed.

The sunny aspect of his new home pleased him. The bracing air, the clear sea, and the breezy expanse of pasture above the town, seemed to sympathise with his active frame, his

free mind, and his large heart. The constant change of light and shadow on the wide waters of the Channel, and on the grassy bosses and slopes of the Downs, freed the scenery from the monotony which made him impatient ; and the magnificent cloud-land, and the sunsets which adorn the evenings of Brighton came upon him then, and always, with a surprise of pleasure. It was his custom, when worn out with the excitement of work, or when he was preparing in thought his sermons, to walk along the edge of the cliffs, or over the rolling waves of the green hills, and sitting down where he could command a full view of sea and sky, restore his heart with the calm, or awake his imagination with the beauty of the landscape.

But, on his first coming to Brighton, he had but few moments of quiet or enjoyment. He was wholly occupied in house-hunting, and with the arrangements necessary for assuming the direction of Trinity Chapel. The following letters sum up the history of the first few months of his life at Brighton :—

9, Montpelier Terrace, Brighton :
August 9, 1847.

MY DEAR —,—At last I am able to tell you that we have fixed upon a house—the above being the address—into which we hope to move to-morrow. . . . I can form no conception yet of how I shall like my work. Brighton is too large to have the disagreeable peculiarities of Cheltenham ; and Kennaway's congregation seems to be chiefly composed of tradesmen. That will relieve me from much that I expected of unpleasantness. Still, looking at the many disadvantages there are, I have great misgivings as to that kind of success which a proprietary-chapel needs—the filling of seats, etc. But Brighton seems a healthy place, and I am sure it is bracing.

My wife is decidedly better than in Cheltenham ; and the heir to my estates and title spends hours on the beach, tossing stones into the sea, without speculating about their future destinies, or the probable depth of the ocean into which they fall.

9, Montpelier Terrace, Brighton :
November 29, 1847.

MY DEAR —,—I only write you one line to tell you of a sad loss and disappointment we have just sustained. My wife has been prematurely confined, and the little girl, a perfectly beautiful little thing, is dead. I have just returned from putting my little beautiful one myself into her grave, after a last look at her calm, placid countenance lying in her coffin. It was by starlight, with only the sexton present ; but it was more congenial to my heart to bury her so than in the midst of a crowd in the glaring daylight, with a service gabbled over her. In the infinite expanse of darkness there was more of heaven and more of God, to my soul at least, and more of that deep, still rest, more profound than death, of which death is but a shadow, for which we are all craving, and in the depths of which we shall soon be—how soon ! My poor wife is sadly cut up, and looking ghastly and haggard ; but Taylor says she is going on perfectly well. I was away in London when it took place (Friday), and did not get home till Saturday night to be startled by the unexpected news. How I got through yesterday's services I scarcely know, unprepared and upset as I was ; but I did get through. I am very much disappointed, but I *feel* that Infinite Love guides all.

An account of his ministry at Brighton cannot have a better introduction than the following, written on his arrival at Brighton. It is full of careful foresight of the difficulties likely to beset him. It marks the earnestness with which he studied his own heart, and resolved to do his duty :—

1. I want two things—habit of order and *de suite*. I begin many things and rebegin, each time with greater disrelish and self-distrust. At last, life will be a broken series of unfinished enterprises.

Hence, I must resolve to finish: and to do this, I must not undertake till I have well weighed, *e.g.* I will not now give up German. I will study scripture-books thoroughly through, histories separately and thoroughly.

I am conscious of having developed my mind and character more truly, and with more fidelity at Winchester than anywhere. Looking back, I think I perceive reasons for this. First, I went out little: hence, perfected what I undertook before fresh impulses started up to destroy the novelty and interest of the impulse already set in motion. It came to its limit unexhausted, *e.g.* in studying Edwards.

Hence, I think, it will be wise at Brighton to go out little; and even to exercise self-denial in this. But I will not commit myself to any plan by *expressed* resolve. I have now only a few years to live. 'Mein Gott! ernst ist das Leben! möchte ich es fühlen!'

My danger is excitability—even in Scripture conversations was it not so? This makes me effeminate, irresolute, weak in character—led by circumstances, not bending them by strong will to my own plan and purpose. Therefore, I must seek calm in regular duty, avoiding desultory reading—desultory visits.

2. *Artificial excellences*.—Goodness demands a certain degree of nerve, impulse, sudden inspiration. Characters too much trained miss these. Some turn their eyes perpetually on self in painful self-examination. Suspicion destroys the *flair* of virtue, its freshness, grace, beauty, and spontaneity. Artificial merits are like artificial flowers—scentless. Cultivate natural, not unnatural excellences.

3. *Explanations* are bad things. 'Man betrügt sich oder den andern, und meist beide. Götz.' You preserve your own

dignity by not entering into them. The character which cannot defend itself is not worth defending.

4. *My mind is difficult to get into activity*—unbewegsam. Therefore, in order to prepare for speaking, preaching, &c., it is good to take a stirring book, even if not directly touching upon the subject in hand. Love is all with me. Mental power comes from interest in a subject. What I have to set in motion is some grand notion—such as duty, beauty, time in its rapid flight, &c.

He preached for the first time in Trinity Chapel on the 15th of August, 1847. His sermon, on a favourite subject—'The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified,' &c.—at once awoke criticism and interest. As his peculiar views developed themselves, many of the old congregation left the church. Their places were rapidly filled up. Thoughtful and eager-minded men came in, by degrees, from all parts of Brighton, attracted not only by his earnest eloquence, but by his original thought and clear reasoning. He clothed in fresh brightness the truths which, because their garments were worn out, men had ignorantly imagined to be exhausted. (He drew out the living inspiration of the Bible, and especially of the historical portions of the Old Testament.) He made men feel the life which ran through the doctrinal statements of the Prayer Book. Whatever he touched sprang into being; and many of his hearers entered on a new existence. Other men who were engaged in the great questions of society and of the world, were drawn to his ministry by the wide knowledge which he showed of past history, and by the force with which he applied

Christianity to the social problems of the present age. Young men eagerly listened to his delicate analysis of the human heart, and of those difficulties of religious thought which, even now presenting themselves for solution, had only then begun to agitate the mind of England. Others of a lighter cast came to enjoy the brilliant imagery and the rapid rush of clear language. Servants and working-men came to hear with reverence and affection a man who spoke as if his whole being were in the words he used, and who seemed to sympathise with their lives as none had ever done before.

The appreciation of his teaching by servants, a class seldom reached by an intellectual preacher, was remarkable. The story which follows is extracted from a short memoir published after his death:—

On the morning of Christmas Day 1847, scarcely five months after his arrival at Brighton, Mr. Robertson, on ascending to his reading-desk, found there a set of handsome prayer-books, which had been presented to him by the servants of families attending the chapel, as a Christmas offering. Naturally affected by this evidence of kindly feeling, he in his sermon took occasion to advert to the subject of presents, and drew a picture of the delight which would fill the heart of a fond brother who, on the morning of his birthday, should awake and find in his chamber a rose placed there by sisterly affection. The simple gift, almost valueless in itself, would be more prized by the brother's heart than a purse of gold. The application of the incident he left to those who could best understand its hidden meaning. The gift was subsequently acknowledged by the following letter:—

'9, Montpelier Terrace, Brighton:
December 27, 1847.

'MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I should not satisfy my own heart if I were not to tell you how much I was gratified on Christmas Day by your thoughtful offering of the new books for Trinity Chapel. It would be injustice to you if I were to say this with the idea that it emanated from any personal feeling towards myself, who am as yet a stranger among you. I am persuaded that your higher motive was the wish to adorn the services of a house dedicated to the worship of God; but, as the minister of that house, it will not be out of place if the thanks are expressed by me. I feel that it was kindly imagined and delicately done; and I am the more touched by being told that all who joined in presenting it are in circumstances of life which make the offering doubly precious. I shall never read out of those books without the inspiring feeling that there are *hearts* around me.

'I am, my dear friends,
'Your affectionate minister,
'FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON.'

As the congregation became larger, and he recognised the several elements which composed it, his sense of the importance of his work increased, and with that his interest in his duty.

And the town in which he was now placed opened to him a fitting field for his earnestness and his genius. The change from Cheltenham to Oxford had not been greater than was now the change from Oxford to Brighton. He had formerly left a half-fashionable place, with narrow interests and a confined sphere of thought, for one of the thinking centres of England, where all social, political, and theological questions were debated with as much eagerness as latitude. There he had easily

taken his place as an inspiring and sympathising teacher. He was now transferred to a town which, more, perhaps, than any other in England, has among its population the sharp contrasts which mutually irritate one another into aggressive life in London. He came into contact at Brighton with religious tendencies and sects as extreme as at Cheltenham, but they were opposed more strongly than at Cheltenham by a bold freedom of thought among the upper and lower classes, which tended in the former to carelessness or silent contempt for Christianity, and in the latter to open infidelity. He met with men of all classes, whose opinions had been formed and widened in the storm and stress of London life, and with others whose prejudices were as blind as those of the smallest village in England. He associated with clergymen of all religious denominations, who had rendered themselves known by their eloquence and their writings or by their active leadership of party. He mingled with persons of every shade of Conservatism and Liberalism, and, among the working men, with large numbers of hot and eager Chartists.

If he had been as fresh and enthusiastic as he had been six years before, he would, like a young soldier, have rejoiced at his position, placed thus in the fore-front of the battle. But, as we have seen, he was worn and weary.

He had a presentiment, which was not altogether painful to him, that his work—done as he did it, with a throbbing brain, with nerves strung to their utmost tension, and with a physical excitement which was all the more consuming from being mastered

in its outward forms—would kill him in a few years. He resolved to crowd into this short time all he could. He had long felt that Christianity was too much preached as theology, too little as the religion of daily life; too much as a religion of feeling, too little as a religion of principles; too much as a religion only for individuals, too little as a religion for nations and for the world. He determined to make it bear upon the social state of all classes, upon the questions which agitated society, upon the great movements of the world.

Shortly after his arrival at Brighton, he had an opportunity for carrying out his intention. The great surge which took its impulse from the volcanic outburst of February, 1848, in Paris, rolled over half of Europe. The decrees of February 25, 26, by which Lamartine declared France republican, chimed in with the hopes of all the educated as well as uneducated minds among the working classes. The cry of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and the demands based upon this watchword, created a wild fear in some Englishmen and a wild joy in others, which were alike irrational. No man in society could be silent on these subjects. Mr. Robertson resolved not to be silent in the pulpit. His spirit was stirred within him, as the spirits of Coleridge and of Wordsworth had been at the beginning of a greater revolution. He rejoiced in the downfall of old oppressions; and in the 'young cries of Freedom,' he thought that he heard the wheels of the chariot of the Son of Man, coming nearer and nearer to vindicate the cause of the poor. He writes in 1848:—

The world has become a new one since

we met. To my mind, it is a world full of hope, even to bursting. I wonder what you think of all these tumults :

For all the past of time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever thought hath wedded fact.

Some outlines of a kingdom of Christ begin to glimmer, albeit very faintly, and far off, perhaps, by many, many centuries. Nevertheless, a few strokes of the rough sketch by a master-hand are worth the seeing, though no one knows yet how they shall be filled up. And those bold, free, dashing marks are made too plainly to be ever done out again. Made in blood, as they always are, and made somewhat rudely; but the Master-Hand is visible through the great red splotches on the canvas of the universe. I could almost say sometimes, in fulness of heart, 'Now let Thy servant depart in peace.'

I have been very much overdone by work here. It is extremely trying; full of encouragement, but full of a far larger amount of misunderstanding and dislike than I expected to meet with. And I work alone with 'many adversaries,' and few to bless; but with a very distinct conviction that I am doing something; and for that I am grateful, for it is well nigh the only thing that is worth the living for.

He had already begun, in January, 1848, a course of lectures on the First Book of Samuel. In explaining the history contained in that book he necessarily entered on questions belonging to the life of society, and to the rise and progress of national ideas. At the very beginning of his exposition he was forced to speak of a great revolution. As he went on, he came into contact with the subject of the rights of property and the rights of labour;* and, in the election of David instead of Saul, he was obliged

* See this subject fully carried out in Vol. i. Sermon xvi., and Vol. ii. Sermon i.

to discuss the limits of authority, and how far an unjust or a weak king is a rightful ruler of a people. So there was scarcely a question debated in 1848 which was not brought before him. He did not refuse them. They were all treated of; but as Israelitish, not as modern questions. It was not his fault that these lectures, running side by side with the national convulsions and social excitement of Europe and England, had a double interest—an ancient and a modern one. It was not his fault that men did what he could not do in the pulpit, and applied the principles which he found in the First Book of Samuel, to the society and times in which they lived.

However, he irritated and terrified almost all parties in Brighton. A cry was raised against him. He was spoken of as a Revolutionist and a Democrat. An anonymous letter was sent to the bishop of the diocese, complaining of a certain sermon, and accusing him of preaching on political subjects, in a manner calculated—when men's minds were excited by the events occurring on the Continent—to disturb still more the feelings of the working men in Brighton. He answered, that if the principles revealed in the inspired history of Israelitish society happened to be universal, and to fit the events going on in 1848, it only proved the deep inspiration and universal character of the Bible, and he was not to be blamed. The following is the letter which he wrote to the bishop in answer to the accusation brought against him. It shows not only how meekly he could reply, but also with what strange acuteness he felt these cowardly attacks. It is interesting

also for the account which it gives of his way of composing his sermons.

MY LORD,—I wrote to Mr. Anderson at the same time that I wrote to your lordship, enclosing the sermon for his perusal, as you had requested him to make the investigation, and told him that I conscientiously believed the sermon to be almost sentence for sentence as it was delivered. I explained to him at the same time that, knowing it to be a sermon liable to be misunderstood, I had written it nearly all out the same night that it was preached, lest I should be compelled in self-defence to publish it, and that what I sent I believed to be in consequence quite complete. Moreover, I expected that your lordship would show it to my accuser, both in justice to him and in justice to me, and that he would have full opportunity of making any strictures upon it. I believe it is accurate even to words. I should say, too, that the word extempore does not exactly describe the way I preach. I first make copious notes; then draw out a form; afterwards write copiously, sometimes twice or thrice, the thoughts, to disentangle them, into a connected whole; then make a syllabus; and, lastly, a skeleton, which I take into the pulpit. May I be permitted to send your lordship the notes I made for this particular chapter, together with the syllabus, as an example of my plan, lest it should seem that, in preaching thus, I save myself toil? Indeed, being unable from nervousness to preach from a manuscript, and finding that the drain upon the mind, necessary for conscientious preparation for preaching without a MS., in addition to other work, is telling very severely on my constitution, I have by the advice of friends relinquished all idea of retaining Trinity Chapel beyond this year, which I have already with deep regret intimated to Mr. Anderson. I confess that I wait with much anxiety your lordship's reply: for though I know nothing was said that could lay me open to episcopal

censure, it would pain me very nearly as much to know that your lordship's opinion was unfavourable to the view I have taken.

Will you permit me, my lord, to urge one thing in reply to the strong feeling which your letter to Mr. Anderson seems to imply has been excited by this sermon? It is a view I have heard again and again from the pulpit, founded on prophecy, that all earthly dynasties will be dissolved before the Messiah's coming. The shattering of the image in Daniel is always so understood. And the turning of the sun into darkness and the moon into blood is usually expounded as figuring the overthrow of earthly powers and aristocracies. These views are preached, published continually, and listened to without offence. The wisest interpreters predict a state of anarchy and violence before the establishment of the Kingdom. And I cannot but think that, if I had taken a dark view of all this instead of a bright one; if I had preached a more popular notion of the Coming of Christ instead of this—that Good and Evil are struggling together, and Good disengaging itself from Evil, not without hideous birth-throes and agonies—the identical view which I preached would have been heard without the smallest opposition; or had I confined myself to lecturing the turbulent lower classes there would have been nothing of severity observed. But I spoke of the faults of those above me, and they complain that they should not be so taught in the presence of their servants and inferiors.

I cannot help believing that—*hinc illa lacryma*, my lord. I feel that in dealing with God's truth a minister of Christ is clear from the charge of presumption if he speak strongly, yet affectionately, of evil or faults in his social superiors. It brings no pleasure with it. It makes him personal enemies. It is ruin to his worldly interests. And worse than all to a sensitive heart, it makes coldness where there was cordiality. Yet through life I am ready to bear this if need be. An earnest

✓ searching ministry among the rich is very, very saddening work. The rest of my life will be consecrated to the poor. Forgive me, my lord, this prolixity.

If such were the feelings with which a certain number among the upper classes regarded his teaching, working men, on the other hand, who were themselves revolutionist in feeling, and all who saw something deeper in the revolutions than a mere blind attack upon existing Governments, listened to these lectures as sincere endeavours towards a Christian solution of great problems. Many a man traces to their influence upon him his escape from the false fraternity and the false freedom of Socialism, into a higher region of thought, where a truer brotherhood and a purer liberty were conferred on him, in Christ. But not only in the pulpit, where he was necessarily shackled, did he meet these questions. A better and a more public opportunity was soon afforded him. In the beginning of the year 1848, he had visited, during a severe illness, Mr. Holtham, a member of his congregation. 'I found one thought,' Mr. Robertson says, 'uppermost in his mind: how shall I do good to the working classes?' Their consultations for many weeks on the subject resulted in a steady effort to establish a Working-Man's Institute at Brighton. The following is an extract from a letter of Mr. Holtham:—

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . Some day, when you have ten minutes' leisure, I want to ask your opinion as to whether anything can be done to awaken the minds of the working men (as yet totally sealed) to the subject of religion.

How I wish that you had the strength of ten men, or that we had a few men like

you. From such as you the working men would learn that religion, true religion, is really comprehensible; that its dogmas are consistent with plain reason—that its teaching is in harmony with *their* consciousness of truth, justice, and generosity; and that in becoming Christians they need not cease to be men.

I am more and more impressed with the width and depth of the gulf which exists and (as intelligence of a certain sort increases) increases between this class and the teachers of religion; and sometimes I really stand aghast and confounded at the mystery involved in it. If ever there was a voice, 'not loud but deep' to reach—if ever there was a life to awaken the working man's sympathy and affection—surely that voice with its 'Come unto me,' surely that life of sacrifice and earnest tenderness, were, and are, all that could be needed; and I think both of us have remarked that not only in this country, but in others perhaps more strikingly, where the working clergy have engraved more deeply than here the history of Jesus upon the hearts of the poor, there *are* traces of a love and reverence for Him, making themselves distinctly seen even in and through the collisions and distractions of life.

Surely, then, all that is wanted is the adoption of an apostolic spirit—the real teaching of Christ to the poor—of Christ, the human, yet how divine; the labouring, the loving, the exalting *Saviour of the people*.

He threw himself with courage—and it needed courage at that time, with enthusiasm—and it needed enthusiasm, into Mr. Holtham's plan. The institute was set on foot. It was supported by the subscription of a penny a week from each of the members. More than a thousand put down their names. They cleaned, and papered, and furnished the house in which they met, with their own hands. The

library was, for the most part, bought by themselves. In this way their independence was secured. But they were not too haughty to accept assistance and gifts of books from the wealthy. Thus, in accordance with one of Mr. Robertson's deepest desires, the rich and the poor were brought together, on the ground of sympathy. He was asked by the committee, which was composed solely of working men, to open the institute by an address. He answered in a letter, which shows that even then, scarcely a year after his arrival in Brighton, the isolation which so painfully affected his career had already begun :—

I do not think I am at all the man that should be selected. They should have some one of standing and influence in the town, and I am almost a stranger; and my taking so prominent a position might fairly be construed into assumption. Again, I am much afraid that my name might do them harm rather than good. They wish not to be identified at all with party politics and party religion; and I fear that in the minds of very many of the more influential inhabitants of the town my name being made conspicuous would be a suspicious circumstance. It is my conviction that an address from me would damage their cause. For though the institution is intended to be self-supporting, yet there is no reason why it should wilfully throw away its chances of assistance from the richer classes, and I am quite sure that of these very many, whether reasonably or unreasonably, are prejudiced against me, and perhaps the professedly religious portion of society most strongly so. Now, I do think this is a point for very serious consideration, and I think it ought to be distinctly suggested to the committee before I can be in a position to comply with or decline complying with their request. Be-

sides this, I believe that they have erred in their estimate of my mental calibre. I wish most earnestly, for their own sakes, that they would select a better man.

Two other letters written at this time and bearing on the subject are subjoined :—

Last night I attended the meeting of the Working-Man's Institute, and was very much struck with the genuine, manly, moral tone of the speakers. I went home with quite elevated hopes for my country when I compared the tone with that of the French clubs. And my whole heart sympathised with what your feelings must have been in the success of your brave efforts. Of course, people who expect in it a perfect Utopia will be disappointed or gratified by finding it *so far* a failure. But the similar institutions of the upper classes have been, like all human things, chequered with good and evil—a means of increasing the powers of good men for good, and those of bad men for bad. You do not expect more than this, the inevitable result of all powers and privileges added to humanity. But they *must* be added, come what may. There is no other intelligible principle which will not be compelled in consistency to recognise barbarism as the highest state.

The following, written to Lady Henley, gives an account of his hopes and fears :—

I am anxious to enlist your sympathy in the cause which I am trying to assist. The case is this. About 1,100 working-men in this town have just organised themselves into an association which, by a small weekly subscription, enables them to have a library and reading-room. Their proceedings hitherto have been marked by singular judgment and caution, except in one point—that they have unexpectedly applied to me to give them an opening address.

A large number of these are intelligent Chartists, and there is some misgiving in a few minds as to what will be the result of this movement, and some suspicion of its being only a political engine.

My reasons for being anxious about this effort are these—it will be made. The working-men have as much right to a library and reading-room as the gentlemen at Folthorp's or the tradesmen at the Athenæum. The only question is, whether it shall be met warmly on our parts, or with that coldness which deepens the suspicion, already rankling in the lower classes, that their superiors are willing for them to improve so long as they themselves are allowed to have the leading-strings.

The selection of books for the library is a matter of very great importance; as I have become aware, since getting a little insight into the working of this institute, of an amount of bitterness and jealousy, and hatred of things as they are, which I had not before suspected in its full extent. And people go on saying, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace!'

The address was delivered on Monday, October 23, 1848. It was listened to with deep admiration and attention. It was so eloquent; the voice and manner with which it was delivered were so thrilling, the earnestness and deep belief of the speaker in all that he said were so impressive, that men said the words seemed imprinted on their characters for ever. It was moreover a brave and noble speech, more brave and noble than can be easily understood at present. Fifteen years ago the feelings and opinions on the social relations of the upper and lower ranks of society, which are common now, were very uncommon, especially on the lips of clergymen. The 'elevation of the working classes,' meant to most men at that time, the destruction of the aristocracy and the

monarchy: to own any sympathy with a Chartist, was to acknowledge oneself a dangerous character: to speak of the wrongs of the labouring men, was to initiate a revolution: to use the words, 'liberty, equality, and fraternity,' and to say that they had a meaning and a truth in them, was to that large class of persons to whom terms have only one meaning and truth only one side—to whom error is error and nothing more—teaching which was perilous in a politician, but almost impious in a clergyman. Supported by his faith in truth, Mr. Robertson cared for none of these things. He taught the right, and left the seed to its own vitality. It cost him ease and finally his life to speak, but he would not be silent. The misunderstanding and censure which he incurred stung him acutely, but could not sting him into faithlessness to duty. He did not seek for martyrdom: few men have ever shrunk more painfully from publicity; but he steadfastly resolved to fulfil his work and to bear its cross. One class, though for a long time suspicious, received his words with joy, and hailed him as a faithful friend. The working-men of Brighton felt that, at last, a minister of the Church of England had entered into their aspirations and their wrongs. And because they were sympathised with as men, and neither patronised nor flattered, neither feared nor despised, they were ready to lay aside prejudice, and hear what a man of another class than their own had to say upon the subjects which were agitating them. There was not one of these subjects which he shrunk from in his lecture. To omit one he would have considered cowardly: to leave one without an attempt at solving it,

unworthy of a man whose business was thought : to touch upon one without bringing Christian principles to bear upon it, unworthy in a minister of Christ. The whole address may be described as an effort to destroy the errors of socialistic theories, not by denouncing them, but by holding forth the truths which lay beneath them and gave them their vitality: to show that these truths were recognised in Christianity and placed there upon a common ground—where the various classes of society could meet and merge their differences in sympathy and love.

For this task of reconciliation he was qualified, not only by his extensive knowledge of history and political economy, but also by the many-sidedness of his views and feelings, and by the chivalry and justice of his character.

There was a kind of double nature in him. He was instinctively a Tory, but he was by conviction a Liberal. His early training at home, his reverence and his desire for a military career, cherished in him the flower of chivalrous obedience, and made him an enthusiastic royalist. 'I suspect,' he says, 'that if the crown were ever to tyrannise, and the people were to rise, I should be found fighting against the mob, at least if, unfortunately, a queen were sovereign.' He was aristocratic in feeling, in tastes, and in sensitiveness. But though his tastes were with aristocracy, his principles were with democracy. His duty to the race was stronger than his sympathy with a class. He therefore resolutely subordinated the latter to the former. He recoiled also from the vulgarity, the loud assertiveness and obtrusiveness of the mob; but he was, on the other hand, too just not to make allowances

for the want of polite training and education. By a manly suppression then of his ultra-sensitiveness, he soon became capable of recognising, beneath the rough exterior of the working-men, their nobility of character. Perhaps, also, the chivalry of his nature, which would have enlisted him, like Falkland, on the side of Charles I. in the civil war, because the king was unfortunate, was now enlisted on the side of the working-classes for the same reason. It was enough for one who once wished that he had been a knight of the olden time.

From all this it followed that his life became a contest between his tastes and his principles, between his sympathies and his duties. He thought himself that 'this discord in him marred his usefulness.' Looking at it more closely, it seems to be that very element of discord, or rather of manifoldness, in his character which made his usefulness. Feeling with and comprehending the nature of *both* sections of society, he was, on the one hand, fitted to hold the scales, to judge, and make peace between the upper and lower classes, and, on the other, prevented from being seduced by the plausibilities of Socialism, or blinded by the prejudices and fears of extreme Conservatism.

Thus, the disturbances in Europe, during which the evils suffered by the working poor rose to the surface of society, did not frighten him out of his principles.

What appals me (he says, writing in 1851), is to see the way in which persons, once Liberal, are now recoiling from their own principles, terrified by the state of the Continent, and saying that we must stem the tide of democracy, and support the Conservatives. Why, what has ever made

democracy dangerous but Conservatism? The French revolution! Socialism! Why, these men seem to forget that these things came out of Toryism, which forced the people into madness. What makes rivers and canals overflow—the deep channel cut ever deeper, or the dam put across by wise people to stop them?

On the other hand, he was not swept away into the alluring current of Socialism. His glance at the politics and passions of the time was calm and clear. His aristocratic tastes, his sympathy with the idea of rank, and his reverence for the past, made it impossible that he should be a Radical. And he systematically opposed Socialism on economical as well as on Christian grounds, as dangerous to the State, and as destructive of the liberty it professed to confer. The result was, that speaking at one time like a Liberal, and at another like a Conservative, he was misunderstood, and reckoned an enemy by the extreme spirits of both parties. He saw the truth itself of the question, while they wished him only to see the half truths which they each held. He met the fate of those who are beyond their time.

He felt, however, that in the conflict in his own mind, he needed some fixed ground on which to rest. Dragged aside by two extremes, he fell back on Christianity, not as a *via media*, but as declaring truths which embraced in their ample round the wisdom of Conservatism and the progressive spirit of Liberalism, which solved the questions of the day—neither by laying down laws, nor by coercive measures for oppression or for liberty, but by spreading in all

classes a spirit of love, of duty, and of mutual respect. This was the ruling idea of this opening address. It was immediately published, and drew comments on it from all sections of the press. The letters to Mr. Moncrieff which are subjoined are an answer, apparently, to some objections made to this lecture, and fittingly begin the letters appended to this chapter:—

XVII.

9, Montpelier Terrace, Brighton:

January 5, 1849.*

MY DEAR MONCRIEFF,—It was a great pleasure to see your hand-writing again after so long a silence. A few days ago, I received a *paquet* containing some Christmas lines, signed 'G. R. M.' Were they yours? If so, thank you very much for them. You were more mindful than I of the claims of friendship; at least, in appearance; for, to say the truth, I was rather ashamed of my 'Address,' and was very unwilling that it should be printed; as an extempore speech never should be submitted to the scrutiny of the closet in its extempore state. For this reason I did not send you a copy; but yesterday, on the receipt of your letter, I gave orders to have one forwarded to you. Now to the point of your note. I have not seen the article in the *Observer*, and very likely shall not see it. My lecture was a hasty production, and offers a mark for severe criticism in respect of many inaccuracies and more inelegancies, as it is only the short-hand report in the newspaper corrected, and corrected carelessly, for which I have no excuse but pressure of work. It has attracted more notice than it deserved, and than I expected, vituperative and laudatory; has been read by

* Though written in 1849, the two letters to Mr. Moncrieff belong, from their connection with the address, to the year 1848, and are therefore inserted here.

her Majesty; distributed by nobles and Quakers; sneered at by Conservatives; praised by Tories; slanged by Radicals, and swallowed, with wry faces, by Chartists. But I do not mean to notice any attacks upon it. It is very faulty; but I know that it has done good. I only wish now that I had done it in a less hasty way. If you wish to annihilate the old lady of the *Christian Observer*, I shall only say, '*Sanguine placidsti Frederick et virgine cæsa.*' For I take for granted she is an old maid, male or female. Is it not melancholy that the popular religion only represents the female element in the national mind, and that hence it is at once devotional, slanderous, timid, gossiping, narrow, shrieking, and prudish? If you make a bonfire of her, will you let me see the paper with which you light the pyre?

Ever affectionately yours,

F. W. R.

P.S.—I should like to have a chat with you on the marvellous events of the past year. Not forgetting the Californian Pactolus, which bids fair to create many a Midas, and decorate him afterwards with ears asinine. As to Europe, I am in ecstasy:—

For all the past of time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder peals,
Wherever thought hath wedded fact.

And I really cannot see that the horrors and atrocities with which the right cause has been advanced ought to lead to any faithless doubt of the results, or whether it be on the whole the cause of God or not: or that the dungeons of the Inquisition and the robber castles of the aristocracy in former ages proved Christianity to be infernal, or the idea of gradations in rank impracticable and diabolical. But I find myself in a minority here on that point, and excommunicated by the religious and respectable. In the midst of all which, I humbly console myself with remembering that One before whom my spirit bows with adoration profounder in proportion as I

understand Him and His infinite mind, was in His day reckoned an infidel and a latitudinarian worldling by the religious, and an anarchist whom it was fatal to the respectability of Caesar's friend to even defend. Oh for His sublime, brave, divine truthfulness!

XVIII.

1849.

MY DEAR MONCRIEFF,—Thank you much for your kind letter. It is refreshing to meet with sympathy of sentiment on such matters, for the only satisfaction I get from being in a 'prominent position' is that of being a good butt for rotten eggs and cabbage-stalks. Loving peace and sympathy, it is saddening to be perpetually provoking 'a sword.'

Now for your strictures—for which I am most grateful, and with which I—do I agree? Yes, and no.

I thought I had based distinctly my own convictions on the Bible, in a way visible to every one, as the source from whence I drew my anticipations for the future. And most unquestionably it is only from thence, that is, from Christ's life and mind expressed in His life, that my views respecting brotherhood, &c., are deduced. No doubt I am called a Radical, but my radicalism is not political, but religious—a principle, and not a scheme—a conviction of the rights of others, and I am quite sure no wish to assert my own. When I first heard the charge of radicalism, some time back, I was astounded, for I had not looked at myself in the glass for a long period, and knew not what manner of man I was. I had tried to *feel* the meaning of Christ's words, and to make my heart beat with His; and so I became what they call a Radical. Nevertheless, the Radicals and Chartists refuse to own me as brother, and call me a rabid Tory. However, of one thing I have become distinctly conscious—that my motto for life, my whole heart's expression, is, 'None but Christ;,' not in the (so-called) evangelical sense, which I

take to be the sickliest cant that has appeared since the Pharisees bare record to the gracious words which He spake, and then tried to cast Him headlong from the hill of Nazareth; but in a deeper, real sense—the mind of Christ; to feel as He felt; to judge the world, and to estimate the world's maxims, as He judged and estimated. That is the one thing worth living for. To realise that, is to feel 'none but Christ.' But then, in proportion as a man does that, he is stripping himself of garment after garment, till his soul becomes naked of that which once seemed part of himself; he is not only giving up prejudice after prejudice, but also renouncing sympathy after sympathy with friends whose smile and approbation was once his life, till he begins to suspect that he will be very soon alone with Christ. More awful than I can express. To believe that, and still press on, is what I mean by the sentence, 'None but Christ.' I do not know that I can express all I mean, but sometimes it is to me a sense almost insupportable of silence, and stillness, and solitariness.

I think there *is* perhaps a difference in our views of brotherhood, but in words more than in reality. I could not say that one man is not neighbour to another, except so far as they *recognise* the Father. Nor could I say that they are not brethren, except in Christ, and as recipients of his Spirit. I believe brotherhood and neighbourhood to be real, *prior* to the acceptance of these truths—real, not realised, but yet to be realised as a duty. And the realisation of them leads to the higher, truer union—union in Christ. The Samaritan was neighbour to the Jew by benevolence, whether the Jew recognised it or not, and whether the Samaritan was, or was not, distinctly conscious of their relation to a common Father. A man, as man, is the child of God; and one child is brother to another, whether they are conscious of their heritage relationship or not. The operatives whom I addressed

were my brother men—though very possibly not my brother Christians, for a large proportion of them were infidels, and a very large number Chartists. And brotherly kindness is brotherly kindness, whether the command of Christ has been received and understood or not. I can go to a man and say, 'Love your brother,' without telling him that Christ commands him so to do, if I believe that he rejects the authority of Christ. But *I* feel clear and firm in my manner of saying this, because I know it is in accordance with Christ's will, though *he* does not. Christ gave the command as one not resting on arbitrary authority, but on eternal principles which are recognisable by the human heart—which ought to be recognised; and which men are morally guilty, more or less, for not recognising on the bare statement of them,

I know that pantheism occupies this ground; and I think that pantheism is, for the most part, sentimental trash, offering no distinct ground on which to rest, but only a cloud-floor, which gives way in temptation, before the present and substantial reality of what is pleasant. Nevertheless, I am no more afraid of a truth because pantheism has unrealised it, than I am of another because revolution has caricatured it into devilry. Nay, I am rather inclined to believe it the more firmly, because I see that even the false phantom of it has had power to enchain so many human hearts. I believe in Juno's beauty all the more from Ixion's passionate admiration of a fog-likeness of her. Base coin is valued because the mint-stamped is gold. Besides, even pantheism itself has its true side. It seems to me to be the necessary reaction from the dreadful dead machinery of preceding conceptions. I think some pantheists are nearer the truth than most evangelicals. Many—most—make this world a machine, at a great distance from which a Superintendent sits, guiding and interfering, certainly, but totally disconnected in his own being and contact from the said machinery, which is in itself com-

posed of quite base and gross materials. Now I believe that the pantheist is right in saying, there is something much more divine in God's universe than that. The life which pervades all is He in whom we live and move and have our being. The different gradations of life are more truly of the same divine essence than the hard material distinctions of common minds make them. The life of the plant, and the life of the animals, and of the intellect of man, are essentially allied to the higher life which theologically we call the divine life in the soul. And I believe that it will some day be demonstrated, that the Creator is much more closely united to His own works than our unspiritual conceptions represent Him. God is a Spirit—by which most people seem to mean a subtle, ethereal gas, imponderable, perhaps, but still not only substance, but matter beside, however attenuated. Now spirit is mind; and I do not know what is meant by the locality of mind, except by saying that the universe is localised Deity, and that the universe is everywhere—and everywhere, according to both psalmist and pantheist, that which waxes old as doth a garment, folded and unfolded as a vesture, is changed—while He, the Former, in the form remains. The Church is 'the body,' of which Christ is the Spirit—the fulness of Him which filleth all in all. The universe, in a sense, is the body, of which God is the Spirit—the fulness of Him which filleth all in all—a lower life, but God's life still. For this reason, I do not know how to 'keep language unequivocal.' The two passages I have quoted from St. Paul and from the Psalms are equivocal—pantheistic in their form—indeed, I suppose one was the language of a pantheist—admitted and adopted by St. Paul in that wondrous way of his which extracted the element of truth from everything, while rejecting the error. My statement above might come from a pantheist's lips; but I am no pantheist—I believe earnestly in God's personality—by which I mean consciousness, character,

and will. Again, I could not say that to aim at the heart's excellences, without seeking the Spirit's agency, is a deep delusion and a dangerous dream. Surely Cornelius, and men like him, did so; and the earnestness of their aim brought that very conviction of a void which opened their souls for the reception of the Spirit. Surely, in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is on his way to God, whether he have heard 'if there be a Holy Ghost or not.' Surely this aim at heart-excellences is the baptism of John. Can we, without unrealising all moral convictions, lend ourselves for a moment to language which seems to say that good is not good, except it have added to it some incomprehensible element, which does not make those who boast of its possession visibly more noble and more heavenly than others, but often very much narrower and revoltingly conceited? In proportion as a man aims at excellence, will he find that there is a Spirit, not himself, but external to himself, which he does not seek, but which seeks him—just in that proportion will he be forced to look—not in, but up and out. Be good, change your lives—repent—aim at heart excellences—that seems to me the first thing to say and the first thing to feel. Then the doctrine of the Spirit comes not as a cut-and-dried dogma, but the interpretation in words of an external necessity of the soul.

I believe we agree; at all events, I am certain our hearts are one in God and Christ. Possibly my expressions are bad and inadequate; but in proportion as I adore Christ (and I do think my whole soul thrills and trembles at the thought of Him, when I understand, or fancy I understand Him, and feel my own heart acquiescing in his life, and views of life and God, and acknowledging them to be revelations), exactly in that proportion do I abhor that which calls itself Evangelicalism. I feel more at brotherhood with a wronged, mistaken, maddened, sinful Chartist than I do with that religious world which has broken

Popery into a hundred thousand fragments, and made every fragment an entire, new, infallible Pope—dealing out quietly and cold-bloodedly the flames of the next world upon all heretics who dispute their dictum, in compensation for the loss of the power which their ancestor, by spiritual descent, pleasingly exercised of dispensing the flames of this world. Luckily, the hope remains that they are not plenipotentiaries of the place with which they seem so familiar. More and more, day by day, one's soul feels itself alone with God, and resolved to listen for his voice alone in the deeps of the spirit.

XIX.

Feb. 4, 1848.

MY DEAR ACWORTH,— I wish you would come down here some day. We have nothing, however, to show, except the sea. In many respects Brighton has the disadvantages of Cheltenham. It is excitable, and the floating portions of society are superficial. The voluntary system, too, is detestable, and cuts the mouth like a Mameluke bit, reminding a man of his servitude at every step. And I feel the wear and tear of heart and mind in having so constantly, and in so unassisted a way, to speak on solemn subjects. A man who is by profession bound to speak for present effect—for, except in the present, what can speaking do?—necessarily injures himself and his character. I do not mean in the way of popularity; for I find nothing seducing in that, and would gladly, joyously give it all up to-morrow for a calmer life; but I mean in the destruction of repose, and the inability to see any truth in its quiet beauty. All proportions are distorted, and it becomes an everlasting race between one's own mind and itself.

I have no one thing to complain of here that I had in Cheltenham, except the excitement, and that is killing. But the utter hopelessness of being listened to is past. In outward success all looks well. Consequently, I work in good spirits. But Sunday night, Monday, and all Tuesday are days of wretched exhaustion—not dependency, but actual nervous pain. I do as little as I can; indeed, I cannot do less; but I begin to fear I shall never keep it up. Brighton air is wonderful; but even that fails.

XX.

Brighton: July 11, 1848.

. . . . I will tell you, however, seriously, one thing which seems to me now plain. Every one is not now called upon to be a martyr for truth. It is perfectly true that whenever there is a great soul pouring out its utterances to the world, there will be a Calvary; but before we pour out our utterances, we should be quite sure that we are great souls, that the truth is one important enough to suffer for, and that the persons we speak to are worth the illumination, and not blind Pharisees, before whom Divine wisdom says, 'Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.' These three rules save from much irritation, which exhausts and does no good, like a great horse kicking at flies, every kick covering him with sweat, and enough to break twenty men's legs. But flies are not men. The convulsive kick goes through the swarm innocuous, and back they buzz and hum again. You always get the worst of it when you kick at flies. Squash them, if you can, without more effort than a switching of the tail; if not, let them alone.

CHAPTER VI.

BRIGHTON—1849.

His Interest in all the Questions which agitated Society—Clairvoyance and Mesmerism—Speech at the Meeting for the 'Early Closing Association'—Opposition which was roused by his Preaching—Work and hidden Life.

Letters from January, 1849, to November, 1850.

IT was in 1849 that Mr. Robertson's genius was most productive and most clear. The political and social disturbances of that year and its predecessor, the ferment which kept all society bubbling with excitement, communicated their ardour and their movement to his spirit. His heart throbbed in response to the music of the march of the world, always to him a martial music. He spoke and thought best when great events encompassed him. Whatever was agitating society, he took up either in the pulpit or on the platform, or in conversation with his friends. But before he gave a public opinion on any subject, he studied it with care. He did not argue blindly on the outside, but sought to attain the central point of a question, that he might see without confusion the different forms under which its idea had manifested itself; and explain, by the analogies of its past, the course of its present development. In small things as well as great this was his method. In the beginning of 1849, Alexis, the well-known clairvoyant, came to Brighton. Mr. Robertson was invited to meet him at several *séances*. He refused at first, but afterwards going, found to his great delight, that in his presence there were no revelations. 'His want of faith,' said Alexis, 'dimmed the mesmeric vision.' 'My close observa-

tion,' said Robertson, 'confused the charlatan.' He treated the matter half mirthfully, half seriously. He laughed, for he thought it a clever cheat. He frowned at the dishonour he believed to be offered by it to the calm and healthy verities of science and law. He was accustomed to mourn over the credulity which clairvoyance and its kindred induced, over the idleness they encouraged, the craving for excitement they created, and over the generation which, seeking after such signs, could not believe in the truth of Christ. The letters which follow exhibit partially these thoughts:—

January, 1849.

I shall not be able to attend the *séance* to-morrow, as that old fox — objects to the presence of any one who is 'wide awake.' There is a very beautiful passage in Virgil's 'Æneid,' in which the ghost of Hector sadly appears to Æneas before the final ruin of Troy, and in a dignified way gives up all for lost. 'If Troy could have been saved by mortal arm, this right hand should have saved her.' . . . That which the noble Trojan said of divine Troy, I now, in foiled and melancholy honesty, say of the divine senses of the celestial sex. Ah! well, it is only a specimen of what goes on in affairs more important. The Father of Lies has it all his own way in this world—in small things as well as in great—and it is a piece of absurd night-errantry to tilt against him.

I sometimes am tempted to doubt whether any one who tries to open people's eyes in science, politics, or religion, is to be reckoned as a sublime martyr or an egregious fool. The Cross, or the cap and bells? Certainly, had it not been for ONE, I should say, the cap and bells.

Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land ;

All fear, none aid you, and few understand.

Why cannot sensible people see the mighty pigeon-plucking of this world without interfering? Why not let the Cagliostro's finger diamond necklaces from queens, and Alexis dupe? What is truth? The path to the pillory of ridicule. What is the champion of truths, big or little? That poor foolish sylph that interposed to save Belinda's curl, and got cut in two by a paltry pair of scissors for his pains.

Now, can you believe that I could have sat down and wept to-day? Not simply to see that foolish scene, so grave and so ridiculous, but to connect it with all the analogy of life. It made me sick at heart to think of the futility of all attempts to tell people the whole of religious truth—to be brave, and true, and faithful. Let people go on in their old way; do not come into collision with foolish old views and superstitions! Say *out* the truths of God: and then what thanks do you get for bringing light to people who love darkness? which nine hundred and ninety-nine in the thousand do.

I think the best work that Signor R—— could consult would be Turton's 'Reply to Dr. Wiseman on the Eucharist.' It seems to me, however, that the surest way of arriving at correct views of this matter is to endeavour to enter into the mind of Christ, His tone of feeling, and the scope of His grand life. Transubstantiation then gradually withers from the conception as a contradiction to Christianity, which is a Spirit and a Life. To localise it; to tie it in any way to the material; to bind it to 'days and months, and times and

years;' to make it 'meat and drink;' to prevent its getting beyond the rudiments, that is, 'the alphabet of the world;' to make it 'subject to ordinances'; to make it anything but the worship of a spirit—God in spirit and in truth—is to go back to Judaism.

But I do not wonder at the belief in Transubstantiation; it only assumes the *fact* of a miracle, very possible in itself—a religious mistake, though a great one. But I do marvel at grown men believing in clairvoyance, and then refusing to listen to the argument for Transubstantiation. I met the other day a lady, thoughtful, independent, and candid, thoroughly inartificial and free from prejudice, who was completely converted into a devotee of the superstition of 1849. After which, I can comprehend that Transubstantiation should have been undoubted for a thousand years, annihilated at the end of that time, resuscitated, and that it should have in it a fair prospect of leading a vigorous existence of, say, another thousand of years.

The next subject which engrossed him, and which brought him prominently before the public, was the closing of shops in Brighton at an earlier hour than was customary. A meeting was called on April 24, 1849, by the Early Closing Association, and he was asked to speak. His speech was remarkable for its grasp of both sides of the question. He thought well of the plan proposed, but for that very reason was calm and sober in his tone, and determined to look in the face all the difficulties which environed the subject. He stood between the masters and the young men. He claimed for the former freedom from coercion; he even spoke of the peculiar difficulties they would have in carrying out the views of the Association, owing to the number of strangers who came into Brighton at a late

hour. He claimed for the latter their right, as men, to time for self-improvement, but he demanded that their leisure should be well employed. Then, with one of his rapid turns of thought, he showed to his audience of the higher classes, that it was not only those who sold, but those who bought, in whose hands the question lay.

It was a noble speech, full of economical knowledge, sober arguments, and wise prevision of difficulties. It is curious to find so imaginative and excitable a man keeping so steadily in the path of common sense. He pleased neither party; one thought his words too bold, the other thought them too lukewarm; but though his speech won few cheers, it made its impression afterwards, when the passions of men had cooled down to the reasoning point.

During the rest of the year he made no public address, except from the pulpit, but from that place his influence radiated every day more powerfully. His chapel became crowded to the doors. His sermons grew more weighty and more eloquent. The two confirmation lectures preached this year, on Jacob's Wrestling and the Parable of the Sower, display the opulence of thought and care which he spent on the education of the young. It will be seen, however, from a letter, written to answer some objections made to his analysis of the despair and suicide of Judas, and subjoined to this chapter, that side by side with his influence, the opposition to his ministry increased and became more harassing. 'It is only too true,' he says, 'that the perpetual chafings and work of a place like Brighton have destroyed all claim to philosophic

clearness, and that I am getting less fit for study and mental tension.' The officious support of some who got up addresses to him, and subscriptions for his portrait, and the vulgarising efforts of others who did the same on mercenary grounds, drew him into a prominence which pained him.

My enemies (he writes), not content with the usual modes open to snarlers, actually invade me in my castle; and on the strength of being religious, come with long faces, though perfect strangers, to warn me of the wrath in store for me hereafter, if I do not repent of my manifold heresies. So you see I am in a hornet's nest, and buffets only exhaust strength in vain, the amount of real good done being very problematical.

To hide himself from this public shadow of himself, he gave himself up to quiet and continuous work. He held a weekly lecture in his vestry for the poor; he visited among them; he endeavoured to draw around him the young men of Brighton belonging to that class which is so rarely touched by clergymen—the shopkeepers' assistants, the clerks; all those, in fact, whom his speech on the question of Early Closing had partially, by its sobriety, alienated from him. He shrank more and more into a hidden way of life, refused to publish his sermons, and kept, as much as possible, apart from society. In a letter written to his mother, at the close of the year, he speaks of some unauthorised publication of one of his Advent lectures:—

The miserable publication of 'St. Paul's Novitiate,' as the printer calls it, was a libel—absurd, curtailed, and in some places absolutely false. Pray—pray let it be known that all these things are more or less misrepresentations, and done entirely without my sanction! It is of great importance that they should not appear, for I have

abundance of slanderers—I cannot tell why, for I molest no one, abstain now even from public lectures, go out very little, and only ask to be left alone. I take no pains to contradict innumerable falsehoods, for it would be endless. I take my own path quietly, and never retaliate.

In the October of this year there began a long and voluminous correspondence with several persons, which has, most fortunately, been preserved. It will appear in its proper place. Meanwhile, the letters which follow include all that can be known of the history of his life during the first nine months of 1849:—

XXI.

1849.

MY DEAR —, I ought long ago to have replied to your kind request for a reply to the objections brought against my sermon on Acts i., but I have always felt a defence of my own views peculiarly irksome, as I am glad to escape the unprogressive task of circling round anything which I have ever said or written.

I will briefly give you the replies which refute the charges of your friend's note.

First of all: my 'desire to be original, and going astray from the old paths.'

Whether I aim at an appearance of originality or not, God must judge, who alone has the right to scrutinise motives and impute them. As to originality, things which are very familiar to those whose reading is professional and varied, may appear new to those who chiefly seek the teaching and read the works of one school of theology. 'Old paths' require to be defined. That which is old now was new once, and treated with very great bitterness at first, as all new forms of truth are sure to be. Evangelicalism was called new-fangled fifty years ago. I presume that no one would maintain that the popular preaching of the present day is in the old

paths, either of thought or phraseology, in which Jeremy Taylor or Bishop Andrews walked; or that they were not liable to the charge of novelty in their day, compared with the tone of thought and teaching prevalent in St. Bernard's; or that Bernard's preaching was not very, very different from that of Chrysostom's day. Nay, more—the Apostles—He Himself—what was the charge against them, but that they did not walk in the old paths, but taught 'new doctrines'? Evangelicalism itself, worn threadbare as it is by trite thought—and certainly, to do it justice, guiltless of mental power or fresh thought, for the last ten years at least—what was it called in the days of Cecil and Scott? The 'good old' High Church talked loudly of new lights.

I am said to have 'apologised for Judas,' thereby falling into one of the various old exploded errors of heterodox teachers, 'to which my desire of seeming original guides me.'

My 'apology' for Judas consisted in saying that his sin was not murder, but unbelief, and that he was sincere in what he did; also that his temptation was Satanic, and that he is in hell.

I do not fancy that Judas would thank me much for my apology. We will examine this heterodox defence.

What I said was, in effect, this. The essential guilt of suicide is unbelief, that is, despair of God's love and goodness. Distrust is the sin of sins, which makes sin sin. Luther said strongly, but not too strongly, 'Nothing damns except unbelief.' My sermon, therefore, charged Judas with unbelief, final and desperate. I do not know what your correspondent thinks of the sinfulness of unbelief; but it is clear that he is very much shocked at a charge of murder being converted into one which only imputes unbelief: *only* unbelief!

I may, perhaps, add that the question, as to what is the essential guilt of suicide, is settled by the reply of Christ when the evil suggestion was presented to Him. He did not allege the Sixth Commandment,

which he assuredly would have done had suicide been murder; but, 'Thou shalt not tempt' (*i. e.* try, make experiment of) 'the Lord thy God.' He treated it as a temptation, not to murder, but to distrust; which was exactly what I did, on His infallible authority.

I shall briefly dispose of the remaining objections.

Your correspondent is scandalised by the expression that Judas was sincere, and says, with a note of admiration, 'the sincerity of Judas, who betrayed his Master, bare the bag,' &c.

I did not say that Judas was sincere in his betrayal of Christ, nor in his stewardship of the common purse—I did not say that he was a sincere man. I simply said, he was sincere in his remorse. A thief may behave honestly sometimes. The unjust steward was commended by his lord. Yet I have heard of commentators of the Rationalistic school who were as much offended with the Bible as your friend is with me, because it commends a man who had tampered with his master's accounts. The Bible, however, commends him, and Christ puts him forth as a pattern to Christians, not because he had acted honestly in all cases, but because he had done wisely in one. He who commended him as wise in that act, did not exactly say that his waste and duplicity were objects of admiration. And if I assert that Judas was sincere in his remorse, it requires some ingenuity to pervert this into an opinion that he was sincere in his kissing his Redeemer. The suicide of Judas *was* the act of a man sincere, even to agony, in his remorse. Did he *pretend* to cast down the gold? Did he *pretend* the pangs which drove him to despair? I say, further, all suicide is sincere. I stated that for the express purpose of showing that sincerity does not make the matter better, and that remorse is not penitence. Your correspondent, without having heard the sermon, hears of a detached expression, and *charitably* assumes that it was part of the 'apo-

logy' for Judas. It formed, in fact, part of the demolition of a supposed apology that might be made for him.

Again: 'Where does Scripture speak of Judas not working out his destiny, by which he was as truly destined to salvation as any other of the apostles, but that his destiny crushed him?'

I reply: Every one has a mission in this world to accomplish. That is the destiny given him to work out. Judas had such a mission. God had appointed him to salvation by His call as truly as the other apostles, unless we are prepared to believe that the Eternal Love predestines to sin. He had a 'ministry and apostleship from which he by transgression fell.' Judas was sent into the world to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. God 'did not will the sinner's death.' Surely, surely, the Bible is plain enough on that point. But Judas would not accept his mission, and then that which was given in blessing turned to curse. His destiny crushed him; he went to his *own* place, the place he had prepared for himself, not the place prepared by God. So it is with you and me. No decree of God has insured our misery. All things work together for good to those who love God. But the same things work together for evil if they do not love God. The sailor who yields to and works with the winds of God is brought by them to the haven where he would be; but if he try to beat up against them, the very gale that was carrying him to safety overwhelms him; he is crushed by the very destiny that was working out his salvation. All I said on this point was simply expository of the sentence, 'He went to his own place.'

I think you told me there was a feeling of condemnation for the use of the word *courage* in connection with the act of Judas. Suicide implies physical courage. There is a higher courage, which I distinctly contrasted with this animal daring, which enables a man quietly and bravely to endure the weariness of this heavy life,

obloquy and hatred. He who has that is safe, as I then said, from suicide; and it was to contrast it with this, that I admitted the other courage which belongs to the suicide.

And to deny this is surely absurd. I do not reckon physical courage very high; but still I do not think there are many gentlemen in Brighton who are men enough to stab themselves, if all religion were out of the question. If it seem a very easy thing to inflict a deathblow on self, perhaps they might come to some conclusion on the point, if they will only try to bind up their own arms, and use the lancet next time it is wanted. This objection is so weak that I can scarcely speak of it with gravity.

Lastly, your friend asks, 'When does Scripture mention the least impatience or any sin in the man Christ Jesus?' and then goes on to speak, with great horror, of my 'awful notion' of admitting the germ of evil, etc. in Him.

I presume this is a misconception of an expression which I have more than once used. Specially dwelling on the Redeemer's sinlessness, I have shown how all the innocent feelings of our nature were in Him, but stopped on the verge which separates the innocent from the wrong. An inclination of human nature is not wrong—hunger, anger—but being gratified unduly, or in forbidden circumstances, it passes into sin. 'Be ye angry, and sin not.' Legitimate anger was to stop short of sinful vindictiveness.

Similarly, Our Lord felt the weariness of life, and was anxious to have it done, amidst perpetual opposition of enemies and misconception of friends. 'How am I straitened till it be accomplished?' 'O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?'

There was no germ of sin in Christ; for sin is the acting of an evil will. Sin resides in the will, not in the natural appetites. There was no germ of sin in Him; but there were germs of feeling, natural

and innocent, which show that He was in all points tempted like as we are.

If I say to a man who is angrily calling Mr. Smith O'Brien a felon, 'You mistake; it is not felony, but treason, he is guilty of,' I have not defended the poor man much by saying he is a traitor instead of a felon—I have simply vindicated the right use of words. If I say Judas' guilt was not murder, but final and fatal despair, and call it, as I remember well I did, the sin of sins, it is somewhat difficult to make me out as an apologist for suicide.

So much for the apology for Judas.

Certainly, there is an exploded heterodox defence of him with which I am acquainted. It was held that not from avarice, but from a desire to force on the acknowledgment of his Master's mission, he betrayed Him. Your correspondent seems to fancy I have adopted this. Mr. M'Neile, no oracle of mine, but a very good man, and high in the Evangelical world, adopted it, and printed the sermon; but his orthodoxy remains unimpeached: nor has he been accused, so far as I know, of affecting novelty, absurd as the view is. But this is the happy fate of all party-men.

Further, however, I said that Judas went to his own place—a very emphatic expression. I said the soul gravitated downwards. The sin which led to suicide led to hell; but it was his own place, in the way of natural retribution, not of arbitrary reprobation. This was another feature in the apology for Judas. I left him in hell. What more would they have? Only an unbeliever!—only in hell!

Now, with regard to the propriety of the assertion that the sin was despair, not murder,—

Your correspondent says, 'Where does Scripture draw a distinction between killing and murder?' The only reason in Scripture for the heinousness of the crime is *not* that it involves hatred and malice, but that 'in the image of God created He man.'

All through the Book of Leviticus a

'German Neology.'

distinction is drawn between killing and murder—all through the Bible. To kill is to take away life; to murder is to kill with malice prepense. The soldier kills, so does the executioner, so does the man who acts under sudden and dreadful provocation, so does the man who acts in self-defence, so does the duellist, so does the man who treasures up a wrong for years. In every one of these the image of God, wherein He made man, is destroyed. Is there no distinction between them? They are all killing; are they all murder? Is it just to brand the guilt of a man, or rather the act of a man, who shoots a footpad demanding his purse with menaces, with the same name as is appropriated to the act of Rush? You may get one rude generic name, like murder, to include a vast number of offences, just as the generic name Animal includes man and zoophytes, with endless intermediate gradations. But it is only a very rude way of talking. And a man scarcely differs from a zoophyte more than the suicide, which has no hatred in it and no malice, does from the murder, which is one of revenge. It is only loosely that we call suicide self-murder; well enough for popular conversation, but utterly unfit for the expression of accurate thought.

All this comes from the loose way in which people think of sin, and the unmeaning way in which they, therefore, talk of the sinlessness of the man Christ Jesus. They forget that He *suffered* being tempted. In point of fact, they deny, without intending it, all that makes His sinlessness sublime and real. They reduce that glorious Heart to a mere machine, and make His life a theatrical exhibition, in which fictitious struggles and sorrows went on. He only *pretended* to struggle with temptation! It really would appear, according to them, that He did not actually *suffer* in putting down the inclination which arose spontaneously and innocently.

However, this is a very large subject, and I cannot go into it.

The insinuation of 'German neology' is a comprehensive and very convenient charge by which all earnest thought is tabooed at the present day. It is quite enough to hint that it is German. So at the time of the Reformation they spoke of Greek and Hebrew. 'Greek,' said a Roman Catholic priest, 'is a new language, just discovered, and full of heresies. As for the Hebrew language, all who study that become Jews immediately.' So they speak of German now. Englishmen seem to think that the Redeemer died exclusively for them, and that light shines nowhere but here. Sixty millions of God's creatures speak German, and can only get their theology in that. Alas! for those who have not the English theology, though it be, unfortunately, only a feeble echo of that which, in its freshness, came from Germany three hundred years ago. 'Verily, we English are the men; and truth shall die with us.' But the singular part of this charge is, that they who make it know so little of the matter, that, like your correspondent, they are not even aware that the present heterodoxy of Germany is not neologian, and that neologianism is exploded even there. To them, neology, rationalism, mysticism, mythicism, pantheism, all mean pretty much the same thing; and one charge is nearly as good as another, because all are vague and mysterious, like the venerable fee-fi-fo-fum of our childhood.

To live by trust in God—to do and say the right because it is lovely—to dare to gaze on the splendour of the naked truth, without putting a false veil before it to terrify children and old women by mystery and vagueness—to live by love, and not by fear, that is the life of a true, brave man, who will take Christ and His mind for the Truth, instead of the clamour of either the worldly world or the religious world: between which two, alas! there is as little difference now as in the days of Pharisaism; or rather, if there be any difference, we know who said that the 'world' of sinners

was, as knowing its blindness, rather in the less danger of the two.

The chief difference between the two views of suicide is this: the one says Hell, and something worse, if you dare to murder yourself. I would rather say, Trust God, and believe in Him as Love, and suicide is impossible. If the other argument were the only thing that could save us from fifty suicides a day, I would not use it; for the goodness which is only produced by fear is no goodness at all. I quite agree, with every fibre of my heart responding, with the sentiment of that noble thinker Milton: 'Were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God, sure, esteems the growth and completion of one virtuous person more than the restraint of ten vicious.'

I believe that the great lesson for us to learn—every day it seems more true to me—is this: God and my own soul; there is nothing else in this world I will trust to for the truth. To those alone we are amenable for judgment—to Him and to His voice within us. From all else we must appeal. Only we must not appeal so haughtily as we are sometimes tempted to do—as, perhaps, I have done on this present occasion—in independence, but not in pride.

XXII.

9, Montpelier Terrace, Brighton :
March 29, 1849.

MY DEAR —,—I will most willingly comply with your request, difficult as it is; for how difficult to express another's feelings! and besides, in a public inscription, as little of private feeling as can be profaned, the better. But will you tell me a little more precisely what you wish? You use the word poet. Do you wish a prose or a verse inscription? For your sake, or your sister's, I would do either; but I think the latter would certainly prove a failure—and is it desirable?

I have never spoken or written a syllable to you about our dear lost William, because I cannot. Every year I feel less inclined than I once was to get upon subjects of the deepest interest. Every year I feel that utterance profanes feeling, and makes it commonplace. He is gone—with all his fresh, bright, marvellous flow of happiness. What is there more to be said than is contained in those dreadful words—He is gone? How often I have thought of the evening he left Tours, when, in our boyish friendship, we set our little silver watches exactly together, and made a compact to look at the moon exactly at the same moment that night, and think of each other! I do not remember a single hour in life since then which I would have arrested, and said, Let this stay. And to William all was so bright and hopeful! Only now and then, the shadow projected by the more solemn and sombre aspect of the Future seemed to rest upon his heart—even that was transient. I have sympathised with you often in secret, dear —; but for him, I see nothing in his lot that is not a subject for envy. Why should we wish him to have remained a little longer?—to have been slashed or mangled in obedience to the orders of some . . . and then to be lost among the names of the innumerable gallant hearts that are made clay of to satisfy the cupidity of East India merchants? Oh no! better, surely, as it is. And as to the eternal question. We know of him—what is all that we can ever know of any one removed beyond the veil which shelters the unseen from the prying of curiosity—that he is in the hands of the Wise and Loving. Spirit has mingled with spirit. A child, more or less erring, has gone home. Unloved by his Father? Believe it who may, that will not I.

XXIII.

February 22, 1849.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I send you the volume of Wordsworth, which you forgot

last night. One must not be too young, either in heart or years, to lie entirely open to his influence.

I fancy character may be measured, both in depth and quality, by the poet who is the chosen favourite. He is a kind of *Nilometer* to mark the depth at different distances on the river. A man's *Nilometer*, in the higher regions, may be Shelley. The wild and marvellous stream is then still in the air region, finding a home among clouds, cutting a narrow way through clefts of rock, flowing for many hundred yards together under frozen patches of snow—a strange and beautiful life in the waste of the eternal silence, issuing out clear and pure and cold a little higher up, from the delicately blue cavern of the glacier. Even in its lower and earthier flow, the stream will appear to hold mysterious connection, as if by invisible sympathy, with its source, and even the inarticulate murmurs of its daily ripples will seem but the cadences which ought to be heard only in those still and solemn realms.

Down in the plains, in the less unearthly part of its course, the water-mark of such a man will stand at Burns. A strong, swift flow, so deep as to scarcely seem to move on the surface; somewhat turbid, but the very earth which discolours it will often be purer than the snow which falls into other rivers direct from the cloud of Heaven.

Between these two regions of such a man's life, Wordsworth will mark the height and temperature of the stream in a part of its course which will be at present invisible—being lost, as is the case with some rivers, for many miles underground. But when this lost power of life shall reappear, Wordsworth will only mark the depth and temperature near the banks. The central depths he will not be able to sound.

XXIV.

February 26.

I have been reading the sermon or essay I sent you, to find in it some clue to the

tone of your note, and in vain—in vain, at least, so far as a legitimate clue is concerned. For surely you have misinterpreted its meaning if you think it says that the spirit of Humanity is to be stilled into silence, that the diviner impulses may start to their supremacy. We do not reach spirituality of character by spasmodic, unnatural efforts to crush the nature that is within us, but by slow and patient care to develop and disengage it from its evil. It is not angelic, but human excellence at which we are to aim; nor can we 'be perfect as our Father is perfect' except in our degree. 'Every man in his own order.' To become saints, we must not cease to be men and women.

For man is not as God,
But then most God-like, being most a man.

And if there be any part of our nature which is essentially human, and to effect the excision of which would destroy its humanity, it is the craving for sympathy. The Perfect One gave sympathy and wanted it. Gave it, as every page will show; wanted it—'Could ye not watch with me one hour?' 'Will ye also go away?' 'Simon, the son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' Found it, surely, even though His brethren believed not in Him—found it in John, and Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus.

Though some of the following letters belong to 1850, it has been considered better, for an obvious reason, to throw them all together:—

XXV.

October, 1849.

I do not read the Fathers now. I know their system pretty well, I believe, from having examined with great interest their advocates' and their opponents' writings! and I am sensible of the healing effect produced by such a system on the mind of those who accept it. Nay, I even know that their errors are but forms of truth which lie beneath them; false forms, which yet

convey spiritual truth to those who do not know or suspect the falsehood of the form. The misfortune is, that I am certain they are false—as false as Romanism—though even in that system mariolatry and purgatory are material and gross statements of spiritual facts, which I think our systems neglect. But then I cannot by an act of volition receive a system for the sake of the comfort which I know to be to *me* a lie. It is at my peril that I thus falsify my inmost nature, and consent to be deluded by a figment. To those to whom it is not a lie, I do not dispute—nay, I cordially, and, I hope, charitably, believe—that the system may be elevating, purifying, life-giving; but I had rather stand alone in a waste howling wilderness, tempted by Satan, and conscious of having stripped myself of all unreality, than accept the happiest consolation that the more inhabited world could give me.

XXVI.

May, 1850.

Do you believe in God? Dare you not trust yourself like a child to Him? Oh, what is your baptism worth if it has not taught you that blessed central truth of all—that He is your Father? Dare you so stifle His voice in your soul, which comes in the simple rushings of earnest thought, and then call it conscience? Are you sure that you may not be shutting out a ray from heaven, although you fear that it is a meteor from hell? . . . I tried no arguments against Romanism, for I feel that Romanism is only an infinitely small and sensualistic embodiment of truths—a living human form shrunk into a mummy—with every feature there hideously like life, especially when it, by force applied from without, by wires or galvanism, moves humanly. . . . God made the soul to correspond with truth. Truth is its own evidence, as the lightning-flash is, as the blessed sunlight is. . . . Alas! alas! you do not believe that you have a soul—you do not believe in God—you do not believe that His Spirit can find your soul—

you believe in the dial, and not in the sun—you dare not be alone with Christ—you do not feel the solitary yet humbling grandeur of being in His vast universe alone as He was, with your Father. His life is not the pattern of your life, and His divine humanity is not the interpretation of the mysteries of your solitary being. You cannot walk the valley of the shadow of death fearlessly, as David did, because 'Thou art with me.' You must have a crowd of — and a number of other good men by some hundred thousands to assure you that you are not alone. All this universe is God's blessed sacrament, the channel of His Spirit to your soul, whereof He has selected two things as types of all the rest: the commonest of all elements, water, and the commonest of all meals, a supper, and you cannot find Him except in seven! Too many, or else too few; but even in that protest against the Protestant limitation of grace to two channels I recognise a truth, only distorted and petrified as usual.

Oh, be brave and wait! These are dark days—lonely days—and our unbelieving impatience cannot bear to wait, but must rashly, and by impetuous steps of our own, plunge after the *ignis fatuus* of light. Peace at once! Light at once! I cannot wait my time, and I will not! I do not say all this as one who is utterly unable to comprehend 'the delusion of people who cannot be content with the sound and excellent principles of our incomparable liturgy.' I only comprehend too well the struggles and the agonies of a soul that craves light and cannot find it. And as to our 'incomparable Church,' why it does not require a prophetic spirit to see that in ten years more she must be in fragments, out of which fragments God will reconstruct something for which I am content to wait, in accordance with His usual plan, which is to be for ever evolving fresh forms of life out of dissolution and decay. If not in my time, why then still I wait. I am alone now, and shall be till I die and I am not afraid

to be alone in the majesty of darkness which His presence peoples with a crowd. I ask now no sympathy but His. If He should vouchsafe to give me more I shall accept it gratefully; but I am content to do without it, as many of His best and bravest must do now.

Why cannot you live with Him? . . .

I have no superstitious evangelical horror of Romanism, but—Alas! alas! for the substitution of an artificial, *created* conscience for the sound and healthy one of humanity, whose tides are distinct and unmistakable in their noble music, like those of nature's ocean in its irresistible swell!

XXVII.

November 25, 1850.

Till to-day I did not know of your loss, which, it seems, is now no longer a fresh grief, so swiftly does time pass. No, God and time are the only cures for sorrow, and they do cure. I feel that the blest are the dead. To live is unvaried trial. . . . Your last letter seemed to breathe a mis-giving about the constancy of my trust and friendship, in consequence of your change. You need not doubt: I wish you had taken a more daring, braver, and truthful course. I wish you had dared to live alone with God for a few years. I believe that you will not find peace long in Rome. But the fact of your being there does not alter my feeling towards you in one iota. Beneath, far beneath all forms of the sight and feeling, I joyfully recognise the unity of that spirit which forms the basis of all true lives. At bottom we mean—all good minds mean—substantially the same thing; and I look forward more and more yearningly to the day when we shall see this, as

well as take it for granted. For yourself I am in less apprehension; for I know that if you are spared, you will not die a member of the Church of Rome.*

XXVIII.

I am where I was, gathering fresh accretions round the nucleus of truth; I hold surer every day that my soul and God seek each other, and am utterly fearless of the issue. I am but 'an infant crying in the dark, and with no language but a cry;' nevertheless I am not afraid of the dark. It is a grand awful mystery! but God is in it, the light of the darkest night.

I am alone, lonelier than ever—sympathised with by none, because I sympathise too much with all. But the All sympathises with me. I have almost done with divinity—dogmatic divinity, that is—except to lovingly endeavour to make out the truth which lies beneath this or that poor dogma, miserably overlaid as marble fonts are with whitewash. . . .

I read Shakspeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Coleridge, Philip Van Artevelde, for views of man to meditate upon, instead of theological caricatures of humanity; and I go out into the country to *feel* God; dabble in chemistry, to feel awe of Him; read the life of Christ, to understand, love, and adore Him; and my experience is closing into this, that I turn with disgust from everything to Christ. I think I get glimpses into His mind, and I am sure that I love Him more and more. . . . A sublime feeling of a Presence comes about me at times, which makes inward solitariness a trifle to talk about.

* A prediction subsequently verified.

CHAPTER VII.

Letters of Mr. Robertson—Complexity of his Character—His Sensitiveness—His Knowledge of Men—His Life in Society—Effect of Climate upon him—Exquisite Perception of Natural Scenery—Impressions received from Art, and how he used them—Appreciation of Poetry—Intensity of Enthusiasm and of Indignation—His Eloquence and its Characteristics—Hatred of the Reputation of a 'Popular Preacher'—The natural Morbidity and the dangerous Tendencies of his Character—The Means he employed to conquer them—His noble Truth and Self-devotion—Causes of the Gloom which appears in his Letters.

Letters, August and September 1849.

IT was in this year 1849, that Mr. Robertson became the constant correspondent of several persons. From henceforth the account of his outward and his inward life is so largely given by himself, that a biographer has fortunately but little to say. But the letters and extracts of letters need in some sort a preface, for many of them are so peculiar, and even startling, from their extremely passionate expressions and morbid excitement, that doubts have been entertained as to the advisability of publishing them. But if they had been kept back, so much of the real essence of the man, so much of that which was most distinctive in him, would be left undisclosed, that no true conception of his character and of his genius would be possible. The extreme complexity of that character, a complexity which naturally accompanied its great powers, will always render it liable to be mistaken. Apparent contradictions, apparent inconsistencies, strange minglings of strength and weakness, continually arise before us, as we read his letters. It would be possible to give to the world a picture of him the harmonies of whose colours would be easily seen by all; but it would not be a true picture. The picture painted in these letters is difficult to comprehend, and the harmonies of its colours are subtly

and perplexedly involved. Many will not understand it, and not understanding will misrepresent it; but to those who can find the key, it will be as varied and interesting as it is full of suggestive teaching.

The root of all that was peculiar in Mr. Robertson's character and correspondence lay in the intense sensitiveness which pervaded his whole nature. His senses, his passions, his imagination, his conscience, his spirit, were so delicately wrought, that they thrilled and vibrated to the slightest touch. His great power of sympathy arose out of this sensitiveness.

My misfortune or happiness (he says) is power of sympathy. I can feel with the Brahmin, the Pantheist, the Stoic, the Platonist, the Transcendentalist, perhaps the Epicurean. At least, I feel the side of Utilitarianism which seems like truth, though I have more antipathy to it than anything else. I can suffer with the Tractarian, tenderly shrinking from the gulf blackening before him, as a frightened child runs back to its mother from the dark, afraid to be alone in the fearful loneliness; and I can also agonise with the infidels, recoiling from the cowardice and false rest of superstition. Many men can feel each of these separately, and they are happy. They go on straightforward, like a one-eyed horse, seeing all clear on one side. But I feel them all at once, and so far I am *alleseitig, ein ganzer Mann*. But I am not such in this sense, that I can

harmonise them all ; I can only feel them. For this greatness there must be an all-feeling heart, together with an all-seeing eye. This world and its inner music is like a perfect band. Each instrument, alone, is harsh, incomplete ; all together are harmony. The world is a full concert : he who hears only one tone, hears imperfectly : he who hears all separately, hears out of tune, discordantly, and confusedly : he only understands the universe who can hear all or most at once. So also with sight. To a perfect vision the impression on two retinas is felt as only one.

Yet there is comfort in this thought. To feel all separately is one step towards feeling all harmoniously. So a town begun in different parts, as Munich, is painful to look at. In years or centuries it will form one whole. Or a country whose railway plans are only partially executed is unpleasant to journey over, for you are perpetually interrupted in your travels. Yet the time is coming when it shall be a perfect network, and every detached bit shall help to connect the rest, and communication with every part shall be had. So I feel as much as I can. I will get every kind of *Bewusstsein*. They will harmonise at last.

His knowledge of men was also due to his sensitive sympathy. He seemed to feel by it, as if by a sixth sense, the character of those with whom he came into contact. It was not through knowledge of the world, nor through reasoning on the actions of men, that he recognised what they were. He felt them. Hence he had a very strange and great power. He almost always felt in the presence of others, not his own feelings, but theirs. He identified himself with them for a time. He was thus enabled to reveal men to themselves, to tell them what their life meant, and how to idealise it and to ennoble it ; to draw out in

them what was best and highest ; and all this with a gracious tact, due also to his sensitiveness, which seldom did too little and never went too far. Thus he had pre-eminently the gift of governing the hearts of men ; and it is high and deserved praise to say of him, that the two great dangers which beset this gift,—the danger lest the power of governing should be degraded into the lust of dominion—the danger lest the desire of retaining that power should end in truckling to men, or in suppression of the truth through fear of giving offence,—were always by him avoided and abhorred.

His sensitiveness followed him into society, and constituted his pleasure and his pain. He was easily jarred ; but when in tune with those around him, when in the company of those he loved and trusted, the harmony of his nature imparted itself to all around him. In his happier moods he was as radiant as a child : he joined with a fascinating cheerfulness in the games and merriment of young people ; it seemed a relief to him to throw off with them the whole burden of life, and to forget the sorrow and disappointment with which his career was beset. His whole being blossomed under the sunshine of love and comprehension : in such society he diffused peace, and drew out from each, all that was best and purest ; but where he felt that he was suspected and misunderstood, he would often sit silent for the whole evening.

The aspect of outward nature, which was society to him, affected him in a like manner. He basked and seemed to live more vividly in broad sunshine. On the other hand, when his nervousness had increased from the pressure of disease, it made all the difference

between rapidity of thought, ease of arrangement of his subject, and laborious failure, whether he wrote in a room which faced to the south or north. At that time, and in a lesser degree always, a gloomy day influenced him like a misfortune, and an ugly, inharmonious colour brought on nervous irritation.

He had therefore an exquisite perception of natural scenery. Those who have heard his sermons will remember how often and delightedly he spoke of the sunsets at Brighton: not indulging in vague description, but, with the artist's power of seeing, italicising, as it were, the essential and characteristic points of form and colour in the clouds and sky. His wanderings in the Tyrol and Switzerland were never forgotten. Certain scenes, especially, seem to have been engraved upon his memory. There is a vivid description of one of these in one of his lectures upon Poetry which is worth quoting:—

I wish I could describe one scene which is passing before my memory at this moment, when I found myself alone in a solitary valley in the Alps, without a guide, and a thunderstorm coming on: I wish I could explain how every circumstance combined to produce the same feeling, and ministered to unity of impression: the slow wild wreathing of the vapour round the peaks, concealing their summits, and imparting in semblance their own motion, till each dark mountain-form seemed to be mysterious and alive; the eagle-like plunge of the lammergeier, the bearded vulture of the Alps; the rising of the flock of choughs, which I had surprised at their feast on carrion, with their red beaks and legs, and their wild shrill cries startling the solitude and silence, till the blue lightning streamed at last, and the shattering thunders crashed as if the mountains must give way. And then came the

feelings which in their fulness man can feel but once in life: mingled sensations of awe and triumph, and defiance of danger—pride, rapture, contempt of pain, humbleness, and intense repose, as if all the strife and struggle of the elements were only uttering the unrest of man's bosom: so that in all such scenes there is a feeling of relief, and he is tempted to cry out exultingly, There! there! All this was in my heart, and it was never said out until now.

Here the accurate delineation of the outward scene and the immediate combination of it with the mental analogue to it in his own mind, are peculiarly characteristic of his genius. He moralised Nature, not wilfully, but unconsciously. Phenomena lay in his brain as pictures upon sensitive paper, till thought seized on them as illustrations; and in proportion to the vividness with which the impression had been received, was the clearness and concinnity of the thought and its illustration. Nothing can be better, *e.g.* than the comparison of the invisible Church existing in the idea of God, and the visible Church mixed with human infirmity and sin, to the Rhone as it issues purple and clear from the Lake of Geneva, and the same river discoloured after its junction with the Arve.

The same sensitiveness regulated the effect of Art upon him. He had no ear for music; but, in certain states of feeling, beautiful sound—only as beautiful sound, not as scientific music—made his mind creative, and lingered so upon his ear that he could not sleep at night. His love of paintings and sculpture arose not so much from the education of the connoisseur, as from the feelings they awakened. He allowed a picture to produce its influence upon him, without, at least at first, an active exercise

of his own mind upon the picture. His was the 'wise passiveness' which allowed the spirit of the work to have its own way with him before he began to criticise. Two illustrations of this will be found in his lectures on Poetry: one, a Madonna at Blenheim, which he 'could not gaze upon without being conscious of a calming influence;' the other, a print of a dying camel in the desert, anticipating in despair its doom from the vultures. 'You cannot look at the print,' he says, 'without a vivid sense and conception of despair. You go through street after street before the impression ceases to haunt you.'

The impressions thus received he retained. He had not, on their reception, 'hooked them to some useful end,' and so destroyed their freshness and universality. Afterwards they came in naturally and freely, as illustrations of ideas and assistance to thought, and, as was often the case, in different connections and with different meanings. In Art, as in other things, he grasped the spirit and scorned the letter. Hence there was a freedom of usage possible to him, which could not belong to the mere critic who had settled the purport of the picture, and so limited its meaning. He was one of the first to recognise the genius displayed in the early efforts of the pre-Raphaelites. When most persons saw only the crude, hard colouring, the ungracious outlines, and the startling way in which features were represented, as if they were seen through a magnifying-glass, he felt at once the power and the truth in the new school of Art, and prophesied its future influence and excellence.

The same principle belongs to his appreciation of poetry. He allowed it to make its own impression. Deli-

cacy of passion and subtlety of feeling made that impression indelible. Presenting his heart in passiveness thus to receive, it was in his power to gain many diverse ideas from the same portion of any poem, the diversity depending on his state of health or mind at the time. The impressions and ideas thus received he then assumed lordship over, and used them as it pleased him. He brought intellect to bear upon them, and became the student and the critic. Thus he relates in his letters, that late one night he was reading the murder scene in 'Macbeth;' and it arose so vividly before his imagination, that he went upstairs to bed with almost the very dread which Macbeth had in his own heart, and was obliged to go back again, to prove to himself that he was not a child afraid of its own shadow. It was easy to see that out of such a strong realisation as this, was born the power which produced his critical explanation of that very scene in his lecture upon Poetry. He had been himself Macbeth. When he divided himself from that experience, he looked back to it, and argued upon it.

Hence it was also a unique pleasure to hear him read poetry. 'No one,' says one of his friends, 'ever interpreted more musically the rhythm, or with more appreciation the beauties, of a poet.' But he seldom read aloud; he required to feel that those who listened, listened with the heart.

In the same way as he felt Art, he felt the thoughts of books and men, with an acuteness prophetic of brain-disease. The pleasure he received on hearing of a noble act was so keen, that it bordered upon pain. Men still recall the deep, almost stern enthu-

siasm of joy with which he spoke of the great obedience of the soldiers who died in the wreck of the 'Birkenhead;' and the tones of his voice when he described the cry of the Hungarian nobles, 'Let us die for our king, Maria Theresa!' The indignation, on the other hand, with which he heard of a base act, was so intense that it rendered him sleepless. His wrath was terrible, and it did not evaporate in words. But it was Christ-like indignation. With those who were weak, crushed with remorse, fallen, his compassion, longsuffering, and tenderness were as beautiful as they were un-failing. But falsehood, hypocrisy, the sin of the strong against the weak, stirred him to the very depths of his being. 'I have seen him,' writes one of his friends, 'grind his teeth and clench his fist when passing a man who, he knew, was bent on destroying an innocent girl.' 'My blood,' he writes himself, after a conversation on the wrongs of women, 'was running liquid fire.'

From all this arose his eloquence and its power. His mind was crowded with images which he had received and arranged in a harmonious order. With these he lit up the subjects of his speech, flashing upon abstruse points the ray of an illustration, and that with a fulness of apt words, and with, at the same time, a reticence, which kept the point clear in the midst of the illustration.

He had also an extraordinary power of expression and arrangement. This belonged to him partly from the sensitiveness of his ear to rhythm—for, like many who have no ear for music, he was acutely conscious of the melody of ordered words—and partly from the sensitiveness of his imagination and of his intellect: the ima-

gination unsatisfied, unless it had grasped the heart of the thought; the intellect unsatisfied, unless it had cut, polished, and placed in the finest setting, the diamond of the thought. To such a degree is this true, that even where the form of a sentence seems to be faulty, its force is even lost if the words be transposed, 'I cared almost as much for the *form*,' writes one, 'as for the substance of what he said, and often asked him, "You said so and so; tell me how you put it?" This he could not endure.'

So entirely was his heart in his words, that, in public speaking especially, he lost sight of everything but his subject. His self-consciousness vanished. He did not choose his words, or think about his thoughts. He not only possessed, but was possessed by, his idea; and when all was over, and the reaction came, he had forgotten, like a dream, words, illustrations, almost everything. It was always as great a mental exertion to recall as to think out a sermon; and he was frequently unable, if he waited till Monday, to write out the notes of what he had delivered on Sunday, unless it had been partially written before-hand. After some of his most earnest and passionate utterances, he has said to a friend, 'Have I made a fool of myself?'

But though he was carried away by his subject, he was sufficiently lord over his own excitement to prevent any loud or unseemly demonstration of it; he never transgressed the boundaries of what is called pulpit modesty. If the most conquering eloquence for the English people be that of the man who is all but mastered by his excitement, but who, at the

very point of being mastered, masters himself—apparently cool, while he is at a white heat—so as to make the audience glow with the fire, and at the same time respect the self-possessed power, of the orator—the man being always felt as greater than the man's feelings; if that be the eloquence which most tells upon the English nation, he had that eloquence. He spoke under tremendous excitement, but it was excitement reined in by will. He held in his hand, when he began his sermon, a small slip of paper, with a few notes upon it. He referred to it now and then; but before ten minutes had gone by, it was crushed to uselessness in his grasp; for he knit his fingers together over it, as he knit his words over his thought. His gesture was subdued: sometimes a slow motion of his hand upwards; sometimes bending forward, his hand drooping over the pulpit; sometimes erecting himself to his full height with a sudden motion, as if upraised by the power of the thought he spoke. His voice—a musical, low, clear, penetrative voice—seldom rose; and when it did, it was in a deep volume of sound, which was not loud, but toned like a great bell. It thrilled, also, but that was not so much from feeling as from the repression of feeling. Towards the end of his ministry he was wont to stand almost motionlessly erect in the pulpit, with his hands loosely lying by his sides or grasping his gown; his pale, thin face, and tall, emaciated form, seeming, as he spoke, to be glowing as alabaster glows when lit up by an inward fire. And, indeed, brain and heart were on fire. He was being self-consumed. Every sermon in those latter days burnt up a portion of his vital power. Weakness of body

made him more excitable, and every excitement made him weaker.

But his eloquence was not only the eloquence of apt expression, of apt illustration, and of excited feeling: it was also the eloquence of thought. He united, in a rare combination, imaginative with dialectic power. He felt a truth before he proved it; but when once it had been felt, then his logical power came into play. He disentangled it from the crowd of images and thoughts which clustered round it. He exercised a serene choice over this crowd, and rejected what was superabundant. There was no confusion in his mind. Step by step he led his hearers from point to point, till, at last, he placed them on the summit, whence they could see all the landscape of his subject in harmonious and connected order. He hated an isolated thought. He was not happy till he had ranged it under a principle. Once there, it was found to be linked to a thousand others. Hence arose his affluence of ideas; his ability for seizing remote analogies; his wide grasp and his lucid arrangement of his subject; his power of making it, if abstruse, clear; if common, great; if great, not too great for human nature's daily food. For he was not only a thinker, but the thinker for Man. All thought he directed to human ends. Far above his keenness of sympathy for the true and beautiful was his sympathy for the true and beautiful in union with living hearts. He strove always fervently to make the ideal real by connecting it with humanity.

In connection with this power of eloquence was his recoil from its results. When he fancied that he was expected to shine, he would relapse

into the most icy reserve. He seldom talked much in general society. He never seemed to have any feeling of superiority.

Unless elicited (writes a friend)—and that was done with difficulty—no one could have guessed the mass of information on all subjects which lay beneath that playful and quiet exterior, but nothing could be more brilliant and magical than the flow of ideas when they did come. He would go on uninterruptedly for hours. Yet he was ever eager to learn, listened to others deferentially, and spoke, even when most excited, with extreme modesty.

Every mental nerve, so to speak, of his delicate nature quivered with pain at being made the common talk and the wonder of a fashionable watering-place. If he hated one thing more than another, it was the reputation of being a popular preacher. He abhorred the very name, as something which brought with it contamination. A chivalrous gentleman, he shrank from the parade of show, the vulgarising of his name, the obtrusion of his merits upon the public. Moreover, he felt that he was more than a fine speaker; and yet, most unfortunately, he convinced himself that his hearers only saw in him a beautiful talker, and not a teacher. Much of the indignant scorn and pride which rushed out sometimes in his words, when he spoke of the common opinions and rules of the world, may have taken their keenness from this conviction.

Not very long after he came to Brighton, a subscription was opened to present him with a testimonial. A book, elaborately bound, was placed to receive names in the reading-room of the Library. Mr. Robertson was

indignant. One day the book mysteriously disappeared. It was never known, but shrewdly suspected, that he had himself carried off the obnoxious volume, and committed it in triumph to the flames. There are praises which are insults, which cannot be received without the receiver feeling self-contempt. He could not understand what he had done to deserve this torture. Such applause galled him, and stung him into galling words. He spoke of being made a stump-orator, of the infinite degradation inflicted on him by popular opinion, of the self-scorn which it engendered. He wrote of it, at the beginning of his ministry at Brighton, in words as strong as those which follow, which date from its close:—

If you knew how sick at heart I am with the whole work of parlement, talkee, palaver, or whatever else it is called; how lightly I hold the 'gift of the gab;' how grand and divine the realm of silence appears to me in comparison; how humiliated and degraded to the dust I have felt, in perceiving myself quietly taken by gods and men for the popular preacher of a fashionable watering-place; how slight the power seems to me to be given by it of winning souls; and how sternly I have kept my tongue from saying a syllable or a sentence, in pulpit or on platform, *because* it would be popular!

There was something morbid in this. He was so wrung by the false admiration which was given him, that he could not feel the true reverence of those who formed the body of his congregation. Indeed, there was an element of morbidness in all the developments of his sensitiveness. But it was a morbidness which had not grown upon him from without like a fungus on a

tree, but which was the natural outcome of his constitution and temperament. It was born with him. He never could have been entirely free from it, unless he had been a soldier in constant warfare. It was increased by physical disease, till it threatened to become a tyrannous power. But here, where his greatest weakness lay, appeared his greatest strength. If he could not exactly say, 'Most gladly, therefore, would I glory in mine infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me,' yet, those who have closely known his character can say for him that he turned his necessity to glorious gain. He transmuted the dross of his nature into gold by the alchemy of Christian effort. 'He was the most inflexible person,' says an intimate friend, 'with all his almost morbid delicacy of feeling—an iron will, impossible to move when it was fixed by principle.' Another writes—

His sharpest griefs never got the better of his power of concentrating himself in thought or in action. He could put them aside, as if they did not exist. Some of his finest sermons were thought out when distress of mind, it might be supposed, only gave him leave to *feel*. Some of his hardest work in the world was done when his spirit was most keenly wounded.

He possessed a clear view of the dangers to which he was exposed by his sensitiveness and impressibility. He might have been wrecked on the same rock as Coleridge. But his resolution was early taken: he would be, by God's help, a man after the pattern of Christ Jesus. He laboured from his earliest years to conquer the perilous tendencies of his nature. They arose sometimes from the excessive nervous irritation which the fierce ex-

citement of mental exertion produced. He met them then by severe physical exercise. Into this, when it was possible for him—and that was but seldom—he entered with the eagerness with which he did everything. He had a lithe form; his step was quick, his carriage soldier-like, and it was refreshing to meet him as he walked, his motion breathed so of activity.

It was almost amusing to go with him when he went out shooting over a moor. He was entirely absorbed in his work. He would walk for hours after a single bird, and reluctantly leave off the pursuit of this coy grouse when night began to fall. He would sit for hours in a barrel sunk in the border of a marsh, waiting for wild-duck. His excitement kept him from feeling weariness, ennui, or discomfort. These hours of delight he obtained about once a year, and, in the earlier years of his ministry at Brighton, they refreshed him. But towards the end, when he had lost nervous force, the severity of the exercise which he sometimes took was a mistake. He reduced irritation by it, but he robbed himself of strength when he had none to spare.

But when the dangers to which his character was liable arose from mental or spiritual causes, he met them differently. When he was tortured by the noise of slander which surrounded him, and by the petty party opposition to which he was subjected, he had recourse to the healing influence of poetry, or took refuge in the study of chemistry, and in the dignity and calmness of the laws of that science forgot for a time the pain he suffered. He did not fall into the common mistake of endeavouring to eradicate his natural qualities because they seemed

to tend to evil : he rather tried to restrain, balance, and exalt them by a higher motive. He fought with evil, he said, as Perseus fought with the sea-monster—from above. His rule of life was not ‘Crush what is natural,’ but ‘Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.’ Far above all other motives was his love to Christ. That was the root of his life, and the life of all his effort. It was a conscious, personal, realised devotion. It was too hallowed a feeling for him to speak much of. It coloured and pervaded every thought ; was an unceasing presence with him ; lay at the foundation of every endeavour, and was brought to bear on every action in life, on every book he read, and almost on every word he spoke.

Temptations and doubts he strove to solve by working among the poor. The indulging in mere aspirations he would not permit himself ; he freed his ideal world from its atmosphere of sloth and vague cloud-land, by putting, as far as he could, his aspirations into action. No work was too small for him. He did not despise the dullest intellect ; and was fair, patient, and gentle in argument, even with the intolerant. He listened to a child with interest and consideration. Somehow, he reached the most dense in a Sunday-school class. He led the children to elaborate for themselves the thought he wished to give them, and to make it their own. No pains or patience were spared in doing this. It was strange to see so fiery a nature drudging on so meekly, and gently, and perseveringly, content to toil at striking sparks out of apparently hopeless clay. But untiring earnestness and unflinching resolution in duty made him do all things as in God’s sight.

The mere pleasure of using fine words about religious feelings, and loud-sounding phrases about social wrongs, he despised with a true man’s scorn. He spoke much of Courtesy ; and a friend has said of him, ‘that his bearing towards inferiors was marked by the most polished delicacy ; that his consideration for the comfort of servants was so great, that they adored him.’ He spoke much of Truth, and he was crowned with its crown—the crown of thorns. He spoke much about Self-sacrifice, and he gave up his own pleasures and pursuits to almost any one. He grudged a sixpence spent on personal gratification, and retrenched in what was even needful, that he might give to the necessities of others, and—he died at his post with his armour on to the last. He spoke much about the wrongs of woman ; and it is very touching to know that during the last year of his life he frequently went forth at night, and endeavoured to redeem the fallen women of Brighton. This was the way in which he waged the battle against himself. It was a stern and a concealed contest. His suffering was great ; but he kept it to himself. Only to one friend he compares himself to the Spartan boy who held his cloak around him while the fox was gnawing at his entrails. The physical pain he endured during the last six months of his life was excruciating. And yet, through all this, nothing is finer than his quiet devotion to all small duties, his steadfast mastery over himself, his unwavering adherence to a course of teaching which brought upon him the censure and slander which, however his reason might despise them, stung his heart to the last.

But he could not always restrain himself. Sometimes, when he was sure of sympathy, his passion broke forth in a redundance of sorrowful words; or his views of life, when physical exhaustion had made him less master over dark thoughts, were poured out in the relief of almost wild expression. It is these passages in his letters which his friends have hesitated to give to the public. But without them, I repeat, any view of his character would be incomplete. Its strength could not be understood unless through what men may call its weakness. Moreover, in these states of excitement—which were partly natural and partly unnatural, partly true and partly untrue—some of his finest thoughts and most delicate analyses of feeling, and some of his most startling eloquence, were produced. Pain made him creative: it was when his heart's blood was being drawn, that the heart of his genius was revealed.

The letters which are inserted after this and the following chapter were written in 1849 and 1850. It must be distinctly kept in mind by the reader who wishes to distinguish between the work of Mr. Robertson and his feelings, who wishes to separate the apparent unmanliness of some of his expressions from the manliness of his life—first, that in these years ill health of a serious character began to throw its sombre shade over life, and extreme nervous irritability and pain to follow every intellectual exertion; secondly, that in these years, also, he recognised clearly, with a sorrow proportioned to his passionate desire for sympathy, the loneliness to which his teaching doomed him, and the systematic opposition which he prophesied, only too truly, would increase year by

year in virulence. One other cause there is for the gloomy hue of some of his letters: it is, that few men have ever felt more deeply than he with the sorrow of the world. Brought much into contact with grief, and pain, and guilt—realising by the force of his imagination the sufferings of the battlefield, and the cry of thousands, homeless, miserable, and done to death by the selfishness of men—appalled by the sin and crime which he saw everywhere and in their true light,—he was often crushed to the earth by the thought of the guilt and suffering of Humanity. He felt them personally, acutely, as if they were his own. It was no fictitious pain, no ideal grief; he could not put it aside. And, in connection with this, the terrible contradiction which all this sorrow, pain, and sin seemed to give to the truth that the Ruler of this world is Love, pressed upon him with a force which fiercely demanded a solution. Abraham's awful question, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' rang in his ears, and again and again was the expression of his inmost thought. He felt that life was not worth living, unless he could find the answer to that question. In proportion to the strange depth of his power of suffering with men, and to the almost preternatural keenness with which he felt the mystery of the great problem of the universe, was the slowness with which he found the answer. But he did find it, as the reader of his letters will see—and in the Cross of Christ. Once found, he acquiesced in its teaching, quietly and faithfully. All questioning, all doubt left him as he drew near to the close of his career.* He could

* See, for proof of this, Letters at pp. 245 *et seq.* I draw particular notice to these

look beyond the scene in which Humanity suffers, to the larger stage where suffering has its result in perfection, and bow humbly before the wisdom of the infinite Charity. But, in the meantime, the inward pain he suffered, both from the doubt and that which suggested it, continually emerges in his writings, and colours his views of life.

Letters and Extracts.

XXIX.

August, 1849.

MY DEAR —,—The translation I sent you of Fichte is not the best. It was reckoned a failure: so, if you like to wait till the new one comes, which will be to-morrow, you can; or, if you prefer that, and then compare it with the other, perhaps that may be better, as it is only by degrees, and with some toil, that any one gets at Fichte's meaning. I have begun to-day a work of his, which I had never read before, with wonder and delight—partly because it must perforce elevate, and partly because it is but the scientific exposition of views to which gradually and unscientifically I have worked my own way; in which I may henceforth progress, but go back never. The first chapter singularly resembles, even in expression, the views of last Sunday's sermon,—God being apprehended by thought, and in no other way approachable by us. Yet it is scarcely singular; for Plato, or the little I read of Plato, gave me an impulse which can never end through eternity, and Fichte's view is scientific Platonism.

My whole being, love and thought, must form themselves round this, and after the spirit of the supersensuous, or else never exist at all. Oh! that I could grasp the sublime truths which have floated before

letters, because it has been widely asserted that his opinions did not give him peace of mind, and that the gloom of his life was

my soul as the solution of life's mystery for years, and which to the mass of minds are but the world of shadows—to me the only realities! . . . I am compelled to penetrate into a region that is invisible, and there, somehow, in the eternal and the unalterable, which is not subject to the vicissitudes of that which is perishable—transient emotions, vexatious circumstances—I seem to find a home. . . . But this is an unsatisfactory, and, what is worse, an unproductive state. It may be grand to expatiate in a world of feeling and loneliness into which human voices do not penetrate. But we have a work to do on this earth: and I am almost sure that that work is done best by those minds which are definite, deal in formulas, and are not haunted by the sick dream of the unfound beauty, and pervaded by a conviction of the unreality of everything except thought and the invisible.

From within we must fetch our strength; for dependence upon aught external to our own souls leaves us strengthless, when its presence is removed or delayed. . . . Our best blessedness can only be shaken to the centre by ourselves. Life is what we make it. And there are delicately-organised minds in which a mental error—a fault in the tone of thinking—can produce more misery than crime can in coarser minds. . . .

XXX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I do most earnestly rejoice that people have felt an improvement and a softened purified tone in my ministry.

I will endeavour to develop the Catechism into the sense in which I am at present content to accept its very words. 'He bore my sins,' for instance, I am willing to say, and in deep humiliation, in a deeper sense than many mean; though I

owing to his views of Truth being unsatisfactory to himself.

doubt not, because deep and because connected with the great principle which awfully pervades the universe, therefore, for that very reason, counted a heterodox sense.

It is often said, '*My sins nailed Him to the Tree.*' There is a sense in which this contains a deep and extensive truth—another in which it is merely the statement of an absurdity.

The crisis of the conflict between the kingdoms of Good and Evil took place in the death of Christ: the highest manifestation of Good in Him—the highest manifestation of Evil in the persons of those who saw the Divinest Excellence, and called it Satanic Evil. To call evil good and good evil—to call Divine Good Satanic Wickedness, there is no state lower than this. It is the rottenness of the core of the heart: it is the unpardonable because irrecoverable sin.

With this evil, in its highest development, the Son of Man came into collision. He died unto sin. The Prince of this World came and found nothing congenial in Him. He was his victim, not his subject.

So far as I belong to that kingdom or fight in that warfare, it may be truly said, the Saviour died by my sin. Every time I hate a good man for his meekness or his goodness—find bad motives to account for the excellence of those who differ from me—judge sins of weakness more severely than sins of wickedness—shut God out of my soul to substitute some lie of my own or of society,—I am a sharer in the spirit to which He fell a victim. He bare my sins in His body on the Tree.

Similarly, He Himself says of the prophets—'The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, shall be required of this generation.' Why? 'Because they bare witness that they allowed the deeds of their fathers.' In their day they did the same thing in spirit which their fathers did in theirs. So in the Sanhedrim Stephen saw the same brood of

vipers which had stung Moses and the Prophets. So, too, the indulger of hatred is guilty of murder, and takes his place with murderers.

But to say that He bore my sins in this sense—that He was haunted by an evil conscience and its horrors for this lie of mine, and that cruel word, &c., is to make a statement of which it is not enough to say that it is false: it is absolutely unmeaning, as well as destructive of all *real* conception of the enormity of sin. No effort can get any conception of what is meant by conscience of another's sin. It represents Him as suffering under a delusion, and makes the whole agony base itself upon a figment, as unreal as a recovery at law under the *noms de guerre* of 'Doe and Roe,' invented by those who had to defend themselves against the monkish chicanery of the Middle Ages by subtleties as ingenious as their own. Quite rightly do the advocates of this 'Redemption by a figment of Law' call this system of *justification* a 'forensic proceeding.'

XXXI.

Enclosed you will find one of those letters which provoke me, though meant in kindness. Is it pride which makes such things offensive, since annoyance implies conscious superiority to the praiser, and seems inconsistent with the apparent humility which disclaims power? I think not. Two gentlemen come into my chapel—one uncertain of my orthodoxy, the other strongly prejudiced against the belief of it: both go away satisfied that all is right, and magnanimously condescend to intimate approval, which, being interpreted, means all is harmless, old, regular, dull. Whereat I have no right to take offence; but the assumption of a right to approve is a little galling, because it implies the idea of being in possession of a measure by which the approver is entitled to try, and, if necessary, blame. To award approbation, is to retain the power and right of awarding rebuke. From an indisputable superior

that can be borne, from a friend it is delightful, for then it is only the answer of a second and a purified conscience. No one is insulted by what his own conscience, the most sacred part of himself, affirms. But when it comes from a stranger who has no claim to friendship, and has no right at least to *assume* superiority, it seems to me very like the comments of a master on a schoolboy's exercise, which he certainly would have scored if it had had faults, and perhaps even given him an imposition. I disclaim the power of ninety-nine out of every hundred who hear me to even judge of what I say; and that, not because I think myself superior to them, and am therefore proud, but because I live in a realm of thought which is not theirs, and they do not know the existence of the problems which I cannot solve, nor can they guess the difficulties. In entering the narrow channel of the Bermudas, the pilot stands not at the helm, but at the bows, looking down into the deep water, clear as crystal, to see the coral reef above which, or rather through which, he is threading his dangerous way. Sometimes there is scarcely twice the ship's own breadth between point and point; yet between those he must go, cannot pause, and ten feet divergence on either side would be shipwreck. He may do his work very awkwardly, and even be conscious of great mistakes; but with the most perfect humility he may utterly disclaim the power of any one standing on the shore to judge his seamanship, who is looking along a smooth, level surface, instead of looking down upon a bed of rocks that lie beneath the surface. No wonder that his tacks, and turns, and zigzag eccentricities of course are perfectly unintelligible. 'I would have steered direct to that point.' 'Yes, my good friend, but did you see the rock? and if not, what can you know about the matter? Come up here, and then give me an opinion if you can.' Now, the pilot who is up there, is not a wiser man than the other, but he has got a different point

of view, and from that point he defies all human judgment, *until you go and sit beside him.*

XXXII.

You ask for an explanation of Tennyson's expression—

When I felt the days before me.*

I think it is one of those of which you cannot distil the quintessence without crushing the flower. The work of analysis in the laboratory is always a coarse one. Earthen crucibles, and hammers, and cold furnaces, and blowpipes, no doubt, scientifically resolve all things into their elements, but the graceful forms of things disappear in the midst of the rude apparatus. However, I will try.

Our connection with the future may be a dead or a living one. Freshness of anticipation and hope make it living. Repeated disappointment or satiety dull that feeling, and, as it were, benumb the sense by which we vividly felt the connection thrill our being. A wire of metal connects you with the electrical machine, and every spark travels to your frame. A rod of glass connects you too, but not electrically, being a non-conductor. You do not feel the innate real force, the spiritual life which is in the machinery before you. It is only machinery. Or, again, did you never in fishing *feel* the life that is throbbing at the other end of the line when a fresh untired fish is running out all the tackle? Did you never observe how all this changes into a dull, dead drag when either the animal is worn out, or a piece of lifeless sea-weed has got entangled on your hook, and draws it perpendicularly, heavily downwards? Magnify that—fancy the vigorous pull of a whale drawing a thousand fathoms of rope

* This is not Tennyson's expression; but the explanation applies truly to the lines, which are—

'O! to feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard the days before me, and the tumult of my life.'

after him, and the boat joyously plunging after, at an appalling rate through an ocean which has no bounds visible on either side, the gunwale brought level with the waves, and the breakers dancing in their spray, with just sufficient risk to make the excitement wilder; and then, I suppose, you have a kind of illustration of a poet's young heart when 'he feels the days before him, the wild pulsation of the strife.' When the life of the future slackens, the mighty mass slowly gravitates, and the pull is a dead one, down rather than up; or else it rises to take breath, and lies flat—to plunge no more into the unfathomable.

XXXIII.

September, 1849.

MY DEAR —,—What do I think of *souvenirs*? I like them *much*, provided they are not costly. Yet I know not whether I do not like even more to dispense with symbols altogether. For they gather round them, by constant use, new associations, by which the old are obliterated, the precious and hallowed first ones. All things worn or often seen are liable to this. The old habit of erecting an altar of stones to commemorate any signal event was different. It was revisited only at the interval of years, and infallibly brought back the old feeling with which it had stood in connection once. But ornaments, and such things, collect *accretions* of daily incidents which they suggest; and the symbol does not naturally, but only arbitrarily, recall the person or idea intended to be consecrated by it. I have an insuperable objection to presents—almost a monomania; I am happier without receiving.

There is a pretension in what is costly, too, that is provoking. It seems to affect to interpret in one kind of value that which is precious in another order altogether—feeling by gold—and feeling is simply incommensurable except by feeling. Gold no more interprets it or symbolises it than

things seen can resemble things heard. Whereas trifles—humble and unpretending—do not challenge an indignant comparison between the preciousness of the material and the preciousness of the feeling, and simply standing as memorials may become valuable.

I do not think I have rightly made clear, even yet, why purchased presents dissatisfy me. The reason is, perhaps, dimly felt, rather than definitely made plain, even to myself. It has been an instinct which I have not thought it necessary to analyse. Let me try. I think I am pained rather than pleased by such souvenirs, because they are arbitrary symbols of regard. They are like the symbols used in algebra to represent any number, say 745. You take a letter, x or y . You say that y equals and represents 745—a connection purely arbitrary. To-morrow y may represent 20, if you say that it is to do so. It is only by an act of the will that the letter represents a number. Take it out of that connection—let the arbitrary meaning pass—and the *natural* idea suggested is a sound.

Similarly with purchased presents. I get a piece of metal or stone, and say, 'let it represent my regard.' This is arbitrary, for the only connection which subsists between it and me, really, is that I paid for it a certain number of pounds or shillings. It is not my idea or device executed in metal (for, then, indeed, the metal does become a secondary, and the device a primary thought—provided the material be not so costly as to overwhelm and annihilate the idea of design and designer); nor is it my work, nor anything which is peculiarly associated with my history, for the laws of such tokens absurdly lay a stress upon the gift being *new*. So that in fact I have merely given my friend an algebraic symbol, which might have represented another as well as myself, and will in truth some day represent *him*, if he die, and it become the property of a relation. Now it may even happen, and I think generally does, that this arbitrary meaning is not the one

naturally suggested by the symbol, but is rather one which it requires a distinct effort of the will to call up and recreate. I use the pencil-case which my friend has given me, daily; but that daily use surrounds it with manifold associations. I used it perhaps, for instance, to write a letter in some desolate place in the Alps, where I could get no ink: well, that association, in spite of myself, rivets itself to the token of my friend's affection. It lies before me ever after, suggesting that sublime scenery, and calling up the forms and features of the friends or strangers who were with me then, rather than those of the donor. Or, perhaps, instead of one vivid association, it may connect itself with innumerable weaknesses which it suggests when I look at it,—sometimes one, sometimes another. It is very plain that its representation of my friend is now no longer the natural, but only an arbitrary one. I can by an act of will recall the algebraic meaning, and recollect that it was said, Let case = ABC 's regard. But by an act of will I can also recall that regard itself without the presence of the pencil-case; so that the symbol is no real assistance to keeping him in mind, because it requires exactly the same effort which would have succeeded without its intervention.

I have no objection to receive costly presents from persons I do not value (except so far as a feeling of independence revolts against accepting them), because I possess a thing which is in itself worth having, and I do not feel anything inadequate in the representation, for they represent themselves these valuable gifts, which is all I want. But with any one for whom I feel regard, a souvenir provokes me to look at it, just as an illuminated cloud does at sunset, because I know the glory will soon pass and leave the dull cloud behind alone. The gold will be there on the finger or on the table as usual; but the beauty of its significance will be gone or dimmed.

There are, of course, some gifts which are not arbitrary, but natural symbols, and

suggest all that is desired without effort. If Sir Charles Napier would give me the horse he rode at Meeanee with the great scar still remaining, no subsequent association could supersede that. The shot he gave my father which grazed him in the action, a letter, something that has been used or worn,—these are natural memorials significant for ever of one thing, and never by any possibility of a second in the same degree.

So much for receiving. I do not mind *giving*; for though I cannot bear to profane, by meaner associations, anything which has once reminded me of a friend, I feel no pain at the idea of that which has belonged to me being profaned. Indeed, I should not apply such a word to it. I give for the pleasure of giving, and also for present use or present pleasure. When those are passed, I like to give again, something which may be of new use and new pleasure. Some years ago, when I could ill afford it, I gave a man a gold snuff-box like a boy: I was not a bit hurt by seeing that same box last year, dull, in evident disuse, lying among a number of gimcracks on a side-table. I know he values me as much as he did when I was a boy. But in receiving it is quite different.

As in this bad world below,
Noblest things find vilest using.

I cannot bear to profane, by common use, even the writing of one I care for. A direction on a parcel or an envelope I carefully tear off and put in the fire, before I could convert the paper even into the cover of a book or another parcel. So much of superstition—is it such?—clings to minds which fancy themselves entirely emancipated from all the delusions of materialism.

For these reasons I am painfully fastidious about receiving. I had rather have nothing, far rather, when I must. I dislike everything except it be of a character such as I have indicated in the class of things enumerated above. Not arbitrary, but natural. . . .

I say a flower is more precious than gold or jewels,—not simply *as* precious, but *more* precious, just because it has no intrinsic value, and because it will so soon wither. Its withered leaves are more treasured than a costly gem, and more sacred because they have not two kinds of value, but only one. Such gifts are as disembodied spirits—*all* spirit, and pure.

All sombre thoughts pass away beneath the genial influence of this serene, cloudless sky. What a soft, pure, pearly blue! and the white smoke rises up into it in slow and most indolent wreaths, as if it were resolved to enjoy itself and *recline* upon cushions of summer air, robed in loosest, thinnest morning drapery of gauze.

Does not every *fresh* morning that succeeds a day of gloom and east wind, seem to remind us that for a living spirit, capable, because living, of renovation, there can be no such thing as 'failure,' whatever a few past years may seem to say?

* * * *

Some years ago, on a moonless, but clear and starry night, I saw the aurora in a form quite different from its usual one—streaks, or rather flakes, of pale pure white light moving slowly and solemnly, exactly as if they were crystallizing over a broad band of red, which spanned the zenith like the reflection of a town in flames. The softer light gradually bathed the fiercer one in its own pure glow, till it blended with it into a translucent rose flush. Harmonized, and yet contrasted with the quietness of an unclouded summer's night sky, it was thrillingly beautiful, and to me, not knowing what it was, mysterious too, almost awful; yet the softest, holiest, thing I ever beheld. . . . That which I rejoice over in your last note is the calm contemplation of the difficulty of life, without the feeling that the mystery is practically insoluble. You are quietly prepared to try in earnest to solve it—making the ideal and the actual harmonize. Others go on contending with

low wants and lofty will, till their mortality predominates. I do trust the possibility of that, the result of perpetual failure, is past with you; your immortality is to conquer. I read that prophetically, even in the passionate way in which you speak of the humiliation of our present state and sphere of action, because resolve is blended with it—a resolve which has recognized all the difficulties, and is yet prepared once more to meet them.

XXXIV.

MY DEAR —,—It is very surprising to find how little we retain of a book, how little we have really made our own when we come to interrogate ourselves as to what account we can give of it, however we may seem to have mastered it by understanding it. Hundreds of books read once have passed as completely from us as if we have never read them; whereas the discipline of mind got by writing down, not copying, an abstract of a book which is worth the trouble, fixes it on the mind for years, and, besides, enables one to read other books with more attention and more profit. I am very anxious to do what good I can while it is allowed me. To this, as to every other thing which has light and life, perhaps the night cometh. Then feelings pass, hopes perish: that which was becomes more faint and dreamlike every day—that which is *done* alone remains with permanency. But a man must prepare *alone*; for, as Goethe says, 'mental power elaborates itself in solitude.' All else is only valuable as an impulse and an excitement to this. Much of our time is necessarily taken up, but we should force ourselves resolutely sometimes to be alone. . . . Broken and interrupted as life is, it demands all the more earnest effort to prevent it *all* falling into fragments. I knew the restlessness and misery of time occupied in a desultory way—the hurried scramble into which it converts existence, and the loneliness and aimless-

ness which it leaves behind, and which tempt one to get rid of them by the same unprofitable seeking of distractions again.

* * * *

All devotional feeling requires sacrificial expression. There is a 'sacrifice of the lips,' and there is also the sacrifice of an offering which involves expense and suffering. The first, being the readiest at command, is the most usually given; but, being given, it unfortunately prevents the other, because, first of all, costing little, words are given prodigally, and sacrificial acts must toil for years to cover the space which a single fervid promise has stretched itself over. No wonder that the slow acts are superseded by the available words, the weighty bullion by the current paper-money. If I have conveyed all I feel by language, I am tempted to fancy, by the relief experienced, that feeling has attained its end and realised itself. Farewell, then, to the toil of the 'daily sacrifice!' Devotion has found for itself a vent in words.

Now there seems to me to be a great difference in the effects produced by these two kinds of sacrificial expression. That by words is simply relief—necessary, blessed—without which smothered feeling would be torture—sometimes, in some minds, madness. But, being only relief, it does not strengthen the feeling, except so far as it prevents morbidness. It rather weakens it by getting rid of the painfulness. It is a safety-valve; but the danger is that so much force should escape by an impetuous rush through this—that there should be little left to bring higher energies into action. For this reason I rejoice, even though made restless, when my words cannot be commensurate with emotions. The other kind of expression, on the contrary—the sacrifice of acts—is not only a relief, but a strength to feeling. You condense your floating vague desires into thin air. There it is, visible—done; one of the facts of life; part of your history, credit

realised in gold; a pledge for the future, for this reason, that if your feelings should alter afterwards, all those acts which have cost so much are thrown away, and become so much time, suffering, expense, lost for ever. You guard the feeling for the sake of not losing all this. Thus deeds become a home which arrest and bind to themselves the feeling and the love which built them up. Your heart becomes the inmate of its own acts, and dwells in the midst of its expenditure. It has given away its home, and it has no other home except in remaining near 'the one to whom all this has been given. Thenceforth two spirits dwell together. I think the *heavenly* philosophy of this is contained in those words, 'Sell that ye have, and give alms . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' We cannot afford to lightly throw away that person or that cause on which we have ventured so much.

No friendship is worth the name, unless it does the highest good, assisting to escape from the manifold forms of selfishness, and to look at duty with fresh impulse.

* * * *

People make great mistakes about fickleness. An impetuous mind shows more ardour in small things than others do, and therefore is supposed to be deeply engaged, whereas all the time it may be conscious to itself of merely hovering round rapidly, without any intention of fixing, or any suspicion of being supposed to have fixed. 'Such touches are but embassies . . . to tamper with the feelings, ere it found empire for life.' Did you ever see the hawk moth in his marvellous gyrations, poised in air with wings vibrating so rapidly as to be almost invisible, though scarcely moving from the spot? He will try a hundred leaves and flowers, or else how could he know where to rest? but he is quite in earnest all the time, and it is the steady pause and unerring dart of the hawk itself at last. I should not call the wild shy insect fickle.

I have been sitting out to look at this lovely night, with a pale pearly sky, *into*, not *at*, which you look, till you have pierced into the for ever. Oh for the "sea psalm" and "the tender grace of a day which is dead," and never can come back! These are the moments when we feel the strange union we have with apparently unconnected existence; yet not the moments when we most strongly realize our immortality. For that, I think, one impulse of human affection or sympathy is more potent.

XXXV.

It is impossible to calculate the effects which may be produced by distrust and suspicion. They make the heart collapse, and wither the character. I believe that universal distrust would ruin any character.

If anything like insincerity or aiming at effect be hinted, it is but natural to endeavour to remove such impressions; but this can only be done by making every word and act look as probable and as natural as is possible. True feelings and true words are suppressed, if they do not seem likely, even supposing that untrue ones are not simulated instead, because they seem likely. All this produces a secret sense of acting a part: true it is that the part is only this, to seem what we are; but that itself is acting, and it is the commencement of a habit of insincerity. Not really insincerity in itself, it is yet in feeling so like to the feeling of insincerity that the transition from one to the other is fearfully facilitated. When the feeling of real duplicity or insincerity actually presents itself, the mind is already half familiar with it, having been familiar with the semblance, and does not recoil with that vehemence which marks a heart that has never suspected itself, nor been suspected. I would engage, if it were not a Satanic task, to make any child a liar by cross-questioning every assertion, and showing him that I suspected every thought

and feeling. He would soon learn to dwell in the region of plausibilities, and cease to breathe the fresh, free air of unconscious truth.

I must have expressed myself very ill for you to have mistaken what I said respecting prayer. I did not mean that the change of heart cannot be obtained by prayer. I only said, though evidently not with sufficient distinctness, that Simon Magus' leaning upon Peter's prayer, was of a piece with the rest of his conduct, and belonged to a mind which looked for marvellous effects from external agency. Money, imposition of hands, prayer,—it was all the same—something that could be performed independently of character, anything but inward moral effort. Prayer was to Simon of the nature of a charm; certain cabalistic words, of the secret of making which efficacious Peter was in possession. I think there is a great difference between Simon's praying himself, and asking another to pray for him. Of course, the latter is also done by Christians, rightly; but in the mouth of a man like Simon, such a request is only superstition, if you compare it with the rest of his character. Indeed, I believe that the reliance which many people now place on the intercession of others for them, leading, as I have seen it lead, to an indolent feeling of some mysterious transaction going on without the sphere of their cognisance, in which they are interested, and the results of which will some day be comfortably their own, is very much of the same nature—a mere belief in magic.

It is also possible that even a man's own prayer may assume this character, and be little more of a spiritual act than the Calmuck's rotation of a metal plate, on which the prayer is inscribed: such, unquestionably, was the prayer of the Pharisees, who expected that 'they should be heard for their much speaking.' Whenever praying degenerates into saying prayers, or when prayer becomes *prayers*, measured and counted, acts instead of

utterances, I think this has taken place. Only in this sense could I say that the soul cannot invest itself with the Spirit through prayer.

As to the remainder of your question—where the inward change begins?—there you touch a point on which I hold it impossible to give theoretical satisfaction, though it does not seem to be difficult to answer it to our own selves practically. The question, in fact, touches the great difficulty of the union of the Spontaneous with the Necessary. A reply, one of the best I know, is given in a book I am reading; whether it will satisfy you I cannot yet say:—

‘What makes a man turn to God in the first instance?’ Unquestionably, the Spirit that is seeking him; but which is also seeking us, which requires a reciprocal effort on our part. I firmly believe that the Universal Spirit, ‘not far from any one of us,’ is seeking all; and in the union-point, where the will of the Finite is changed by, and voluntarily adopts as its own, the will of the Infinite, lies the answer to the deep question you have put—‘What makes a man turn to God in the first instance?’ I despair of ever giving, or ever seeing given, a clearer reply than this, which leaves the matter still unfathomable; for plainly there is something in it deeper than the furthest-reaching minds have yet penetrated. Once it was a question of torture to me, interfering with energy, and paralysing me with the feeling of being a mere machine, acting under the delusion of spontaneity. Now I am pretty well satisfied with the practical solution of the question, except in moments when thought works darkly, apart from action—God’s own appointed eye-salve for the blinding disease of speculative tendencies. My reply (for myself sufficient) is this:—Reasoning tells me I am a leaf, blown about by the breath of the spirit-wind as it listeth. I review the reasoning step by step, find no flaw in it. Nothing but a horrible predestination environs me.

Every act of my past and future life, external and internal, was necessitated. The conclusion is irrefutable. I act upon this. Immediately I find that, practically, I have got wrong. I cannot act upon the idea of being fated, left of will, without injuring my whole being. My affections are paralysed, my actions disordered. I find, therefore, that the view which is theoretically truth, translated into conduct becomes practically a lie. Now, on the other hand, conscience tells me I am free. I am to seek God. I am not to lie passive, waiting for the moving of the waters, but to obey a voice within me which I recognise as divine, and which says, ‘Arise, take up thy bed and walk.’ My intellect stands in contradiction to my conscience; but conscience is given me to act by. In matters of duty, therefore, I am bound to obey my conscience rather than my intellect. I believe the voice which says, ‘You can seek God and find Him, rather than the one which says, ‘Poor victim of fantasy, you cannot stir, you can only wait!’ There is the best *concise* reply I can give you to your question.

XXXVI.

A Character.

I thought I saw that sympathy and questionings had roused her, and anything is better for her than a dead calm, when the sails hang flaccid by the masts. I build the hope of usefulness upon this kind of influence with more certainty than upon any other, and it is a great delight to me to find that it is not yet exhausted, but still tells; just the same kind of delight which a pilot, I suppose, feels when, in the midst of a long tropical lull, the ship once more acknowledges the helm in his hand. And this is only one of the many indications which makes the wants and needs of her character intelligible to me. Excitement. The word, unfortunately, only has a bad sense, and we have not another for the corresponding good one; as our phlegmatic

national character cannot acknowledge any excitement to be good or natural, and therefore provides no name for such an idea. Excitement—by which I mean that which *stirs*, and gives us a vivid consciousness of actually being—is at once the health and disease, the food and poison, the need and the bane, of her existence.

Some people can be wound up, and go for years without winding up again; but you cannot wind up a Geneva watch in that way. The longer a habit is persevered in, the easier it becomes to them. It is not so with her: she needs perpetually the construction of a set of habits, in order to save her from the weariness of 'unchartered freedom;' but no sooner has habit threatened to become inveterate than it passes into monotony, and she pants for freedom—she wants then again to feel

—The wild pulsation that she felt before
the strife,
When she heard the days before her, and
the tumult of her life.

The truth is, that it is a living life that she needs—successions of the habitual and the impulsive: the habitual, to give her rest; the impulsive, to make her feel voluntariness—the life of feeling instead of the horrid deadness of machinery. But every time she passes from one of these states into the other, will be a state of trial—settling down from excitement, rousing up from monotony. Both will cause her suffering, just as drowning and resuscitation are both miserable sensations. The only remedy against this would be to discover, if possible, a new invigorating excitement before the old has worn out. She is happy, calm, bright, active, good, energetic, when she has been moved; for I perceive—and how well I understand it!—that her heart sets her intellect and other powers in motion, not her intellect her heart. I wish I knew how deep necessity for excitement could be harmonised with equally deep need of rest. No form of life will do that which does not healthily

combine satisfactions for both these wants. I have not said all I want to say about excitement. It seems to me, as things are, to do her more harm than good; she takes it indiscriminately of all kinds. That astonishing description given by De Quincey of the experience of an opium-eater, passing from sublimities almost celestial into horrors quite infernal . . . or that strange state which I felt for twelve hours under the influence of chloroform, and vainly attempted to describe. If she would use the chloroform of life prudently, under control, to assuage pain, it might be well. Her exquisite susceptibility, managed with a philosophy which she is capable of, and which is but the application of and the only real use of self-anatomy, would fit her to be one of the noblest beings I ever conceived. I speak thus out of painful experience. My nature resembles hers in many things—impulsive, sustained in good by stimulus, flagging without it; and yet exhausted sometimes to a state in which I could call Dante's conceptions of the *Inferno* dull. For example, the thought of drudging on here at the same work, unvaried; two sermons a Sunday, inspiration by clockwork for several years, is simply the conception of an impossibility. I want perpetually the enthusiasm which comes from fresh views of duty and untrodden paths of usefulness—new impulse from the heart; yet that in itself, when it comes, leaves me worn to the extremity of endurance. Something of this I have observed in her, with keener susceptibilities and less of the necessity which, at the same time that it galls, forces me to work at a given time. Consequently, I make no doubt, she suffers more and has fewer remedies. My safety lies, or rather lay, in the resolve to work up to the collar, hot and hard, without intermission to the last, not leaving time or coolness to feel the parts that were galled, and raw, and wrung. It would, I suppose, have ended soon, only in doing all this I stirred the human feelings of others for good. . . . How

ever, I have that which she has not—a routine. . . . It is from this similarity that, knowing myself, I think I partly know her and her needs. The key to all her character is its impulsiveness, and the whole secret of her moral improvement and inward happiness lies, not in the blunting but in the right direction of it. . . . Strength is what we want in all trials, small or great. The cup did not pass, even at the entreaty with tears which came from Him, but there was seen an angel strengthening Him to bear, and to drink it in gentleness, not to put it aside.

XXXVII.

Another.

Often it is the safest way to shut the eyes and be half-blind to many things in a friend's character, which must be taken as it is, for better for worse; but in —'s character I am grateful to find that his perfect transparency reveals only the more delicately the moss-fibres, which are not blemishes but beauties in the rock-crystal. I was prepared to discover many faults, but I was not prepared to find that the very faults and the things which disappoint will bear the magnifying-glass, and only give fresh insight into a character which perfectly astonishes me by its exquisite delicacy. I do verily believe that his imperfections are like pearls in the sea-shell—aberrations from healthful nature, if you will, but more tender and tinted with heavenlier iridescence than even the natural shell itself.

Some failings are so precious that they command reverence, and touch deeply, like the fine blue mould which grows on sweetness, and which you gently brush aside until a closer scrutiny has shown you how curiously and finely beautiful it is. I can trust that character.

Altogether my conviction receives fresh accessions of strength, that in all that belongs to the finest as well as the loftiest of character, I have never met anything that

came near what I dreamed—a being not conventionally right, not correct by rule, not stiffened into propriety by a little hoard of maxims, but moving often in new worlds amidst relationships and spheres of feeling where others would be bewildered, and left without chart or compass, and yet guided unerringly by a kind of sublime instinct, as the bird of passage is, in its high flight for the first time through fields of air, where the sound of wings was never heard before. The more I see, the more I honour that marvellous heart, the more I feel it is unlimited and incalculable; in this way possessing that of the infinite, without which I suppose it would be impossible to feel towards anything with perfect security of permanence. —'s character is a living one, inexhaustible. None can prophesy what he will say or do under given circumstances; but when the event has shown, then all is found in harmony with the rest, and beautiful; and the discovery of these new traits is a source of perpetual surprise and ever-fresh pleasure. From the first, I perceived that — was not to be tried by the laws by which others are fairly tested, just because their life is guided by them. I should as little think of referring —'s life to the ordinary maxims of convention, as I should of applying the simple ellipse of the common planet's revolution to determine the course and aberrations of the comet; yet the comet is vague and eccentric only to an astronomy which is not advanced enough to estimate the larger number and the complication of the forces which are at work within it and without it. Its wild and wondrous flight is just as really in obedience to a law within itself, as the career of a common star—only a higher and more comprehensive law—and its apparently capricious movements might be calculated with as much certainty, if only the mathematics large enough were found. I like a mind and heart which I cannot calculate, and yet in which I have the firmest trust that there is in them no caprice, and which are for ever ruled by law. I can

repose on such an one in faith, even when I cannot understand. Only by faith can friendship with such an one subsist. Nothing has struck me more than the refined perceptions in reference to a friendship that is passed. It is very rare and very beautiful to see feelings which once were true, respected after their truthfulness has passed away. . . . There is strength as well as delicacy in one who can still respect, and be just to the memory of obliterated friendship.

XXXVIII.

A Stray Thought.

Perhaps no man can attain the highest excellence who is insensible to sensuous beauty.

A sense of earthly beauty may, and often does, lead to softness, voluptuousness, and defilement of heart; but its right result is to lead on as a stepping-stone to the sense of a higher beauty. Sensuous beauty leaves the heart unsatisfied; it gives conceptions which are infinite, but it never gives or realises the infinite.

For human beauty is a sight
To sadden rather than delight,
Being the prelude of a lay
Whose burden is decay.

Still it *leads* on to the infinite. It answers partly to a sense which it does not satisfy, but leaves you craving still, and, because craving, therefore seeking. The true objective of that sense is moral beauty; and by degrees we find and feel, as the outward fades and crumbles away, that there is a type of real beauty hidden under its seeming. Through the sensuous we perceive the supersensuous; through the visible the invisible loveliness. Through disappointment at the unreal phantom,

we learn to believe in and live for the unchangeable. No man knows the highest goodness who does not feel beauty. The beauty of holiness is its highest aspect. To act right because it is beautiful, and because noble, true, self-denying, pure acts commend themselves to a soul attuned to harmony, is the highest kind of goodness. 'To see the King in his beauty' is the loftiest and most unearthly attainment. Can any one be keenly alive to this who has no heart for external beauty? Surely he who is callous to form and colour, and unmoved by visible beauty, is not above, but below our nature; he may be good, but not in the highest order of goodness. Goethe says that the Beautiful is above the Good: probably meaning that the beauty of an action is a more spiritual and elevated notion than its obligation or its usefulness.

* * * * *

He was a wise father who firmly severed the rope by which one son was precipitated into the abyss for ever, in order that he might secure the other, the half of his happiness. And if one half of man's being can never fulfil its end in this life, it is but wise to give to it the eternal farewell resolutely and decisively, if the unexpected prospect present itself of enabling the other, which is, after all, the nobler half, to rise out of the caverned gloom into the light of day. Yet it is a desolate sensation and a sharp one—that act of drawing the knife across the strands of the cord, and saying, quietly, 'for ever.' Not a pleasant one when the sullen plunge of that which was once so cherished is heard below in the dark waters of a sea which never gives up her dead. . . . The other half is destined to ascend like the brother saved by the sacrifice of the other son.

CHAPTER VIII.

OCTOBER 1849—DECEMBER 1850.

Visit to Cheltenham—New Interest in the Lives of Others and in Ministerial Work—Depression—Great Intellectual Activity—Afternoon Lectures on the Book of Genesis—Gorham Case—Sermons on Baptism, on the Sabbath, on the Atonement—Virulent Opposition—Solitary Position—Summing up of Life—Internal Dissension in the Working-Man's Institute—Proposition to admit Infidel Publications into the Library—His Speech on the Occasion—Its Meaning—Its partial Success—Reconstruction of the Association—His Letters on the Subject—Speech at the Meeting against the Papal Division of England into Dioceses—Two Letters of Gratitude from Working Men.

Letters from October 1849, to December 31, 1850.

IN October 1849, Mr. Robertson paid a short visit to Cheltenham. He walked and rode over the haunts which had been endeared to his youth. He renewed some old acquaintances, and rekindled the embers of old associations. There were many happy and many exquisitely painful recollections awakened within him. 'These cases,' he says, speaking of some disappointments he had suffered, and some opportunities he had lost, 'have come like the odour of newly-turned earth upon my heart.' On the whole, the visit appears to have done him good. Perhaps the comparison which it forced him to institute between the past and the present made more plain than before his own advance in intellectual energy and spiritual knowledge. It is by comparing periods, not days of life, that progress becomes manifest. He returned to Brighton convinced that he had gained clear views of truth. In the Tyrol, in 1847, he had despaired; now, though he was wearied of life, he could say, 'I know the right, and even in darkness will steer right on.'

There arose in him about this time, also, a greater interest in the lives of others. He had thought too much about his own trials and difficulties. He had been a 'self-torturing sophist.'

Speaking of his past life, he says of himself, 'Formerly, my eyes but slept to look within: all my interest in the outward world faded in comparison with my intense interest in the inner world.' But now he had discovered new interests. He found among his congregation some whose mental and spiritual difficulties were similar to those which had been his own, and to whom he could give the sympathy and help which are born of a Suffering which has passed into Victory. All his powers were aroused. By entering fully into the lives of others he freed himself from much of that painful self-consciousness which is the curse of a sensitive character. In proportion as his friendship was deep was his imagination penetrative into the characters of his friends, and that to such a degree that he took their lives into his own. And for all in whom he became interested, he was untiring in effort. He invented new plans for their lives, new interests, new pursuits. He sought ceaselessly for remedies for their trials, and means of escape from their perplexities. There never lived a truer friend.

It was at this time also that his interest in his ministerial work became greater, though, from his letters, the contrary might be imagined. But the

passages in which he describes his dislike of preaching and his own coldness of heart are, in reality, descriptions of the reaction of feeling after the intense excitement of preaching. Such passages are almost always to be found in letters written on Monday. They are in themselves proof of the almost awful intensity with which he laboured. He could not do his duty with the quiet monotonousness which neither wears out the mind nor exhausts the body. He did it with a repressed fierceness which, when the time of its expression—on Sunday—was over, left him a prey to thoughts which, in healthier moments, he denied to be his own. 'I am not fit,' he says, 'for ministerial work. I want years and years to calm me. My heart is too feverish, quivers and throbs too much as flesh recently cut by the surgeon's knife.' Thus the deeper his interest in his work, the greater was his excitement; and the greater the excitement, the more morbid was the reaction, the more gloomy the aspect in which he saw his labours, the darker his misgivings of their success.

And it is no wonder that he was at this time so exhausted and so painfully depressed, for his mental work was great. Never during his whole life had his intellect been more productive. In October he preached upon the question of the Sabbath, which was being then agitated in Brighton in connection with some new post-office regulations. The sermon is published in the first volume, under the title of 'The Shadow and Substance of the Sabbath.' In November, he embodied in a sermon—'Caiaphas's View of Vicarious Sacrifice'—his partly original theory of the Atonement. In December alone, he

preached fifteen times—mostly on the advent of Christ. He delivered to crowded congregations on Friday mornings four Advent lectures on Christianity in contact with the Greek, the Roman, the Barbarian, and the Jew, which were in their way unique. He preached on Sunday mornings such sermons as 'The Means of realising the Second Advent,' vol. i. 152; 'The Principle of the Spiritual Harvest,' vol. i. 211; and the 'Loneliness of Christ,' vol. i. 227. In the afternoons, he finished his lectures on the Acts of the Apostles, with which he had begun the year. Towards the end of the month, he preached—on the day of public mourning for the Queen Dowager—the only sermon published during his lifetime—'The Israelite's Grave in a Foreign Land.' Most of these sermons have been preserved; and they are, even in a literary point of view, wonderful, considering the short time in which they were produced, for their sustained power of thought and of expression, for their research and originality. None of them are unworthy of the others; none of them betray carelessness of preparation or dependence on mere fluency of diction. It is fortunate that they were preserved, though their preservation cost him more labour than their preparation. They were written out for a friend from memory, the evening of the day on which they were delivered. Everyone knows how irksome it is to recall, in cold blood, what has been said in excitement; to write out, in the study alone, what has been brought out by the presence of numbers. It was peculiarly irksome and irritating to him, but he did it freely and gladly, because impelled by friendship. He forgot the

toil ; but the toil did not forget to produce its fruit of exhaustion. If there be added, to complete this account of one month's intellectual work, that almost every day he was engaged in preparing the pupils of the Training School for examination, it is astonishing that he was not more morbid in feeling and outworn in body.

Early in January 1850, he went away to recruit his health and to visit some friends in Ireland ; but the visit was not long enough to restore his strength. On his return, he commenced lecturing in the afternoons on the Book of Genesis. His letters prove how systematically and fully he prepared for this work. The lectures, when published, will show with what mingled wisdom and freedom he met the difficulties of the earlier chapters ; how fairly he stated the claims of scientific and historical truth, even when they were in conflict with the narrative of the sacred text ; and while declaring that the Mosaic cosmogony could not be reconciled with geological facts, still succeeded in showing its inner harmony, in principles, with the principles of scientific geology. Neither did he shrink from putting his congregation in possession of the results of German criticism upon Genesis. He made them acquainted with the discussion on the Jehovah and Elohim documents, but he did not deny the Mosaic compilation of these documents. He discussed fully the question of the universality of the Flood. He spoke with a boldness, adorned with a rare reverence, upon the vexed and generally avoided subjects of the confusion of tongues, the destruction of the cities of the plain, the temptation of Abraham.⁶ In no case, however,

* See Appendix iii.

was his preaching destructive, but constructive. Men went away from his chapel opposed, it is true, to the popular theory of Inspiration, but deeply convinced of *an* Inspiration. It was, indeed, impossible, in treating of these matters, to avoid the great question of Inspiration, and its limits ; it was, therefore, introduced incidentally from Sunday to Sunday. His mind became stirred on the subject. But the only result of this interest was his translation at this time of Lessing's small treatise on 'The Education of the Human Race,'* The following sentence occurs in one of his letters, written in March, 1850 :—

I projected once a work on Inspiration, and had well-nigh resolved to do it—a year ago, when the impulse to do great things and to be a standard-bearer was renewed with mighty force. Had I kept to this resolve, Lessing's remarks, and some other fragments, should have been translated as pioneers ; for the English mind is not prepared yet, and Lessing's advice (67, 68, 69,)[†] is worth attending to.

In March, while these lectures on Genesis were still continuing, the Gorham case was decided. With the decision given he fully agreed ; but he thought it necessary to meet the whole

* Published in London : Smith, Elder and Co., 1858.

† 67. 'The youth must consider his Primer as the first of all books, that impatience at being only preparing may not hurry him on to things for which he has, as yet, laid no basis.

68. 'And that is also of the greatest importance now. Thou abler spirit, who art fretting and restless over the last page of the Primer—beware ! Beware of letting thy fellow-scholars mark what thou perceivest afar, or what thou art beginning to see !

69. 'Until these weaker fellow-scholars are up with thee, rather return once more back into this Primer, and examine whether that which thou takest only for duplicates of the method, for a blunder in the teaching, is not, perhaps, something more.'

question openly before his congregation, and endeavour, as was his custom, not to reconcile the opinions of both parties, or to steer a middle course between both, but to discover a higher truth, in which all that was true in the opposing views might be retained, and all that was false discarded. This was done, as he believed, in the two sermons which have been published.*

They created a great sensation in Brighton. They displeased, of course, both the extreme parties; but they reconciled to the Church many who had despaired of ever accepting the teaching of her Baptismal Services.

Thus within the short space of six months, which perhaps were the most important in their results on Brighton, and through his published sermons on the general public, he had—not with that Pharisaic liberalism which thanks God that it is not as other men are—not from the desire of being peculiar—not without any thought of self, but from faithful following and brave speaking of what he believed to be true—put himself into opposition with the whole accredited theological world of Brighton on the questions of the Sabbath, the Atonement, Inspiration, and Baptism. The results were sad and dreary for him. His words were garbled; passages from his sermons, divorced from their context, were quoted against him; persons who could not understand him came to hear him and look at him as a strange phenomenon; he became the common talk of all the theological tea-tables of the town. People were solemnly warned against him; those who knew little of his doctrines, and less of himself, attacked him openly, with an apparently motiveless bitterness. He

* Vol. ii. pp. 45—61.

had dared to be different from the rest of the world, and that in itself was revolutionary. He was called Neologian, Socialist, Sceptic: all the cruel armoury of fanaticism, and especially the weapon of blind terror, was used against him.

In December, 1849, he writes:—

It is not all smooth sailing. Indeed, the bitterness and virulence of which I hear in every direction are quite unaccountable . . . and women are even more violent in their bitterness than men. Once these things moved me: it is strange how little I care for them now. Once I met them with defiance, and scorn for scorn: now I wonder they ever could have provoked me. I desire to be as meek and gentle under dispraise and dislike as I am indifferent to flattery. Oh that I could breathe the Spirit of Him who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not! For, in His case, *all* was undeserved; but I cannot tell how much, in my case, rashness and pride have irritated people. This, however, I have learnt—that three years of perpetual warfare with the world, and the repayal of hatred for love, were no trifling endurance. To simply bear the dislike which had been provoked, was not so difficult; but to persevere in exasperating it day by day, and never flinch even when His loving spirit sank and flagged in the wilderness and in Gethsemane, and still go on, till hatred did its worst—oh! I think I know what that must have been to a loving spirit, when I so felt it with a stern one!

And on January 1, 1850, he writes, speaking of the sermon on the death of the Queen Dowager:—

The sermon will be published, I expect, this week. It will be some time before I rush into print again; and that was not the sermon to have selected. It has nothing in it—at least, nothing that I know of—

good or bad; though, I doubt not, the heretic-hunters will find plenty of tendencies towards Mahometanism, Red Republicanism, Puseyism, and Swedenborgianism. I was tormented into publishing, and in an evil hour of weakness gave way, for which weakness I now feel the twinges of remorse. How long will sermonising continue? With all my heart, I hope not to the end of life, unless life is very nearly done; for it is a kind of mean martyrdom by a lingering death, like the benevolent system of roasting at a slow fire, in which the good Christian people of former times manifested the extent of their Christian proficiency.

Thus, a partaker of the destiny of those who dare to preach Truth higher and more spiritual than is recognised by the teachers of their time, he stood apart—a very solitary man. On the last day of 1849, he preached on the loneliness of Christ. The sermon (vol. i.) was an unconscious but vivid portrait of his own career and life; it was written with the blood of his own heart. And no one can be astonished, who places himself in his position, and realises his ultra-sensitiveness, at the summing-up of his work at Brighton, written in February, 1850. It is almost needless to say that this summing up, though true to his own point of view, was not in reality true. His labours had been most successful; the greater part of his congregation were devoted to him; he was revered and loved by them with an unobtrusive reverence and a silent love, which were too deep to be openly expressed. But this very silence of affection and veneration, so different from the loud applause given generally to a popular preacher, he, most strangely, almost wilfully, refused to recognize. He only saw in the mass of his congregation those who came to criticise or sneer,

or to listen to him as a stump-orator; he only heard the slander, the bitter speaking, the theological clamour of his opponents. To all the rest he was blind and deaf. He sums up thus, in a most touching manner, his life:—

February 11, 1850.

A year has passed, nearly, since I resolved to live above this world. O God! how little has been done! High, bright, enthusiastic hopes of things impossible, and of things possible still, how they teemed in my imagination! The ideal, of course, always transcends the actual, and now experience of life again, with its manifold struggles, 'fallings from us, vanishings,' has left a sobered, saddened, but unconquerable resolve to life in earnest.

Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not written of the soul.

Farewell, all visions and wishes of distinction—farewell to them for ever! But not farewell to something holier and better, far holier, and more worthy of beings whose divine spark is mixed with clay. I can hear in my heart the 'still sad music of humanity,' and selfishness seems to me even more contemptible than it did, now that I am more distinctly conscious of an end to live for. *My* career is done. And yet I do not look on life with any bitter or disappointed feeling, but gently and even gratefully. I read the last stanza of Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality from the Recollections of Childhood,' which have something of the subdued and chastened feeling which I am beginning to realise:—

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, or glory in the
flower, etc.

I am not sorry that the wild throb of romantic, boyish anticipation of a future can never be felt again. I know the realities of a world of error now, but whose

Maker's name I am profoundly convinced is Love. I feel its grand, sad laws, and I bow myself to them submissively, not wishing them other than they are.

These were his thoughts in March, 1850. It was now, while everything connected with him had a curious interest for the little world of Brighton, that the Institute for Working Men, to the welfare of which he had united himself from the beginning, began to suffer from internal dissension. He had long foreseen the possibility of this. There was a radical error, in his opinion, in the constitution of the society. In his preface to the 'Address on the Question of the Introduction of Sceptical Publications into the Library of the Institute,' he states this error clearly, and its results. After narrating the origin of the Institute and its objects, he proceeds :—

It was, of course, foreseen that the rock on which such a plan might be wrecked, would be any successful effort to divert the funds and machinery of the Institute from its original intention to the purposes of a political party.

But, in this case, the withdrawal of all well-disposed persons would leave the association to dwindle till it became quite extinct. For its very existence depended upon numbers. The experiment, therefore, appeared to be a perfectly safe one, inasmuch as perversion of its purposes must inevitably be followed quickly by annihilation.

One fatal oversight (such, at least, it appears to the author of these pages) in the constitution of the society realised the foreseen danger. It has been justly held that the working men ought to have in their own hands the management of their own society, lest the smallest suspicion should arise that there was any desire in those who were their benefactors to coerce or trammel

them. Every attempt at interference was scrupulously avoided. All this was wise and just. But beyond this, not only was the domination of the upper classes made impossible, but even their assistance and advice excluded, by making honorary members incompetent to vote or act in Committee; a mistake which originated in an over-scrupulous generosity on the part of one who suggested it, but fatal, because false in principle.

To have vested the power of unlimited control or rule in the richer classes, would have been a surrender of the very principle on which the plan rested. But to reject all co-operation and assistance from them, to receive their contributions and refuse their advice, was to create and foster a spirit, not of manly, but of jealous independence, and to produce in a new form that vicious state of relationship between class and class which is at this day the worst evil in our social life—the repulsion of the classes of society from each other at all points except one, so as to leave them touching at the single point of pecuniary interest. And thus the cementing principle of society is declared to be the spirit of selfishness—the only spirit which is essentially destructive. A fatal blunder!

It was on Thursday, March 28, that the proposition to admit infidel publications was discussed in a meeting of the members of the Institute. He wished to go, and 'to impart,' as he said, 'a healthier tone, if possible;' but on the same night he writes—

I did not attend the meeting of the Working Men's Association, as I told you I had intended, and am almost sorry I did not; but some of the committee were afraid for me of violence and rudeness from the Socialists, and thought too, that even if I swayed the vote by a speech against the infidel publications, they would only say that it had been done by the influence of priestcraft. On this consideration I left

them to fight the battle for themselves, and I sincerely hope that they have got a signal victory. But I find by inquiry that Socialism has made terrible strides in England: Louis Blanc's views are progressing swiftly. They say we must get rid of the superstitious notion of an invisible God. Till that is done, nothing can be effected. And then, of course, Communism and a scramble for property ensue.

A strong Radical told me that he can remember the time when Toryism was in the ascendant in public meetings here, and the Radicals only just able to make head against it. Then Radicalism became triumphant; but now Radicalism is to Socialism what Toryism was to Radicalism, a kind of feeble aristocracy which can scarcely show its head, so completely is it put down by the ultra-Socialism of Louis Blanc's school.

A few days afterwards he writes again—

I have been all the morning interrupted by deliberations respecting the affairs of the Working Men's Institute, which is in terrible disorder. Poor — is dead! and there is no one to stem the torrent of infidelity but myself. I am going to make a desperate attempt in a public address.

It was almost imperative that he should do so, for he was bound up with the interests of the Institute. He felt that he was personally compromised by its proceedings. He felt that the whole cause of the elevation of the working man was in jeopardy. He would not be silent. He asked no advice of either party; alone, he took the whole responsibility of a public address. It was a great responsibility. For, on the one hand, there was the large minority of sceptical and chartist members in the Institute, who would call his effort 'priestcraft,' and prate about being lorded over by a clergy-

man and a gentleman, and perhaps attempt personal violence; and, on the other hand, outside of the Institute, there were not only those who, exasperated against him already, were likely to become more so by the bold way in which he felt he ought to speak; but also others, who, having seen enthusiastic folly in the whole scheme from the beginning, would now think this last attempt to save a sinking ship the crowning folly.

With that fine confidence so characteristic of him, he threw himself upon the sense and candour of the men.

His speech was long remembered for its tact. The great room of the Town Hall was crowded to excess. Every class in Brighton was represented in the audience. All the working men of the Institute were there. The large minority of sceptical Socialists had come determined to make a disturbance—to hoot him down. They had dispersed themselves in parties throughout the room. He began very quietly, with a slow, distinct, and self-restrained utterance. He explained the reason of the meeting. When he spoke of himself as the person who had summoned them—as one who was there to oppose the introduction of the infidel books, knots of men started up to interrupt him; a few hisses and groans were heard; but the undaunted bearing of the man, the calm voice and musical flow of pauseless speech, powerful to check unregulated violence by its regulated quietude of utterance, went on, and they could but sit down again. Again and again, from different parts of the room, a man would suddenly spring to his feet and half begin to speak, and then, as if ashamed or awed, subside. There were murmurs, pas-

sionate shuffling of feet, a sort of electricity of excitement, which communicated itself from the excited men to every one in the room. At last, when he said, 'You have heard of a place called Coward's Castle—Coward's Castle is that pulpit or platform from which a man, surrounded by his friends, in the absence of his opponents, secure of applause, and safe from a reply, denounces those who differ from him,' there was a dead stillness. He had struck the thought of the turbulent—the very point on which, in reference to the address, they had enlarged; and from that moment there was not a word, scarcely a cheer, till the last sentence was given. It seemed, said one of them, and what he said was confirmed by others, as if every man in the room were thrilling with the same feelings, as if a magnetic power flowing from the speaker had united them all to himself, and in him to one another. The address was the most remarkable of all his speeches for eloquence, if eloquence be defined as the power of subjugating men by bold and persuasive words. It was remarkable for two other reasons which may not occur to the ordinary reader. First, in it he revealed much of his inner life and character. He was forced by the circumstances under which he made the address to speak of himself. The personal explanations into which he entered were an overt self-revelation. But there was one passage in the address in which, without the knowledge of his hearers, he disclosed the history of the most momentous period of his life. It has been already quoted (p. 55), and is the most important passage in all his works for any one to study who wishes to know

what he suffered, and how strongly he emerged from his suffering at the great religious turning-point of his life. Few men thought, as he delivered those magnificent sentences with stern and suppressed emotion, that they were forged in the fire of his own heart. But all did feel that he was disclosing to them the central principle of his whole life, the result of all his past religious struggle, when he spoke the following words:—'I refuse to permit discussion this evening respecting the love a Christian man bears to his Redeemer—a love more delicate far than the love which was ever borne to sister, or the adoration with which he regards his God—a reverence more sacred than man ever bore to mother.'

This address is also remarkable, because in it he boldly threw down the gauntlet to his opponents. It was not only an address to the working men, it was an address to the whole of Brighton. Perhaps he did not do this consciously. But those who knew the state of feeling against him which has been described above, felt that he was making his apology, not in the sense of a recantation, but in the same sense as Socrates made his apology before the Athenian people. He was out of the pulpit. He could speak more freely. He appeared not so much as the clergyman as the man. It was remarked by more than one that he wore a black cravat. When he said that infidelity was often the cry of narrowness against an old truth under a new and more spiritual form—sometimes the charge caught up at second-hand, and repeated as a kind of religious hue-and-cry, in profoundest ignorance of the opinions that are so characterised—when he denounced

the 'religious' newspapers—when he said, 'I have learned to hold the mere charge of infidelity very cheap'—when he poured pity, instead of anathemas, on Shelley, because 'God was represented to him as a demon, and Christianity as a system of exclusion and bitterness'—when he declared that the existence of God could not be demonstrated to the *Understanding*—when he defended himself for having said that there was 'a moral significance in the works of Dickens,' and called the objection 'cant'—when he spoke of the taunts which he had heard levelled against 'his friends the working men,' and his connection with them—when he refused to join in the cry of men, terror-stricken by events upon the Continent, that to instruct the working men and to side with them was giving sinews to infidelity and socialism,—he was in reality appealing to the general public against the private clamour which had been raised against his teaching, and boldly asserting that he stood undismayed by his opinions; that, in spite of all, he would not bate one inch, but steer right onward. And as such it was accepted. Many men who had taken up the blind cry against him, listened, and went away saying, 'That is a true man; a man different from that which I imagined him to be; a man with whom I do not agree, but in the attack against whom I will join no more.' The manliness of Brighton, even where it differed most widely from him, was, after that address, always on his side. Nor was the mode in which he made this defence unworthy of himself or of a Christian man. It was daring, determined, but in spirit gentle. Speaking of the suspicion, misrepresentation, and personal dislike he had incurred, he says—

I do not say this in bitterness. I hold it to be a duty to be liberal and generous even to the illiberal and narrow-minded. And it seems to me a pitiful thing for any man to aspire to be true and to speak truth, and then to complain in astonishment that truth has not crowns to give, but thorns; but I say it in order that you and I may understand each other.

The result of the address on the members of the Institute was more successful than he had expected.* Some of the sceptical minority were convinced that they were wrong; the rest separated in a body, and, carrying off with them a large portion of the library and property, established a new society, which did not long exist. The majority, along with some waverers who were confirmed into truer views of social questions, combined to carry out the views of Mr. Robertson. The first thing done was to rescind the old rule that no gentlemen were to be admitted to vote or act on the Committee, and to reconstruct the Association on this amended footing; the second was to ask Mr. Robertson to be their new President. The two following letters will show how readily he entered into the difficulties which beset the first, and how wisely he refused the second:—

NO. I.

I will pledge myself, if your society is formed, and contains in it the elements of vitality, to give either an opening address or a lecture before the close of the year.

But it seems to me a matter of great importance that public attention should not be ostentatiously called again so soon to your efforts at self-restoration, so long as they are only efforts. If the Institute is needed,

* It was published in the *Letters and Addresses*.

really craved, and earnestly desired by the working men, they will enrol themselves in sufficient numbers to insure its existence without the excitement of an address. If they would not without this, then I am sure that to attempt to secure their adhesion by such means would be very dangerous.

On the former occasion nearly 700, in a fit of transient enthusiasm, joined themselves, I believe, and (out of about 1,300) withdrew directly after. If artificial means are necessary to preserve its existence, then the society will soon die a natural death; and we should be again covered with the shame of an abortive attempt. The cause of the working men cannot *afford* this. Better fail silently than make another public confession of incapacity.

Now, an address at present would draw the attention of the town. It would perhaps induce waverers to join, as all public excitement does; and it might secure immediately ready money. But these are trifles compared with the risk of withdrawal of many soon after. And suppose that enough to support did not join?

Let me propose therefore—Begin your society as soon and as quietly as possible; that is, as quietly as is consistent with that publicity which is necessary to acquaint the working men with the fact of a new association being in process of formation. If sufficient members do not present themselves, then the thing quietly dies away till a better opportunity; and be sure that no artificial excitement could have given it permanence, though it might have caused a premature abortive birth.

After some months, if the association lives with internal strength, then we may try external aids. I, for my part, pledge myself as I have said. But the great lesson for us all, in these days of puffing advertisements, is to learn to work silently and truly, and to leave self-advertisement and self-puffing to people who are on the verge of bankruptcy.

NO. 2.

In reply to your letter of this day, I may

briefly say that the idea of my accepting the presidentship of the Institute is quite out of the question. I do not consider myself competent for such an office, nor am I sure that it would be to the advantage of the society. . . . I believe I could assist the members more truly, at all events more independently, in a subordinate position. Prominence and power are things for which I have no taste.

I am *very* anxious that there should be no second failure, but I think that the greatest wisdom and experience are needful to prevent it. . . . The working men have shown that even a right-minded majority is unable to protect itself against a turbulent minority, without the introduction of other elements of society to support them—to support, not dictate; for I should be very sorry to see a majority of gentlemen on the Committee. But they want some, of weight and wisdom, to fall back upon. And, indeed, this is the only true democratic principle to my mind—not an oligarchy of the poorest, but a fusion of ranks, with such weight allowed, under checks, as is due to superior means of acquiring information.

What grieves me to the heart is to see distrust in the minds of working men of those wealthier than themselves; and nothing is more mischievous or unchristian than to gain popularity with them by fostering these feelings, and insinuating that the clergy and the religious and the rich are their enemies, or only espouse their cause for an end.

I must not accept any high office: I am their friend, but I want nothing from them—not even influence, nor their praise.

If I can do them even a little good, well; but for their sakes I must not take anything which could leave on one of their minds the shadow of a shade of a suspicion of my motives.

The society, after working admirably for some years, has lately, to the great regret of many, been closed for want

of support. It does not appear, after Mr. Robertson's death, to have been taken up by any person, with the exception of Mr. Ross, outside of the actual sphere of the working men.

After the delivery of the above-mentioned address, Mr. Robertson did not appear in public, except in the pulpit, for many months.

The end of 1850 is celebrated for the mistake which the Church of Rome made, and for the short and foolish blaze of excitement kindled by it in England. The mistake of the Church of Rome was in departing from the quiet method of conversion they had been using. The foolishness of the English people was in making a great noise, only to end in the pretentious nonentity of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Brighton was, of course, convulsed. Platforms and pulpits rang with a jangle of denunciations. The only man who seems to have kept his head was Mr. Robertson. His speech at the 'great meeting' was a model of good sense and calm knowledge; a quiet protest against what he called, with fine irony and with accurate acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, 'an act of schism on the part of the Church of Rome.' What he thought privately of the whole matter will be found in the following extracts:—

This foolish act of the Pope has made Protestants nearly beside themselves with terror. Already they see the fires of Smithfield lighted, thumbscrews at work, and the 'mystery' of the Apocalypse throned at Canterbury. We have a great meeting here on Thursday, to which I look forward, only expecting a vast deal of foolish talking, and perhaps recrimination, banded back against the Church of England. Here have the bishops been coquetting with semi-Popery for fifteen years, but the moment it

assumes an attitude invasive of their spiritual privileges, 'the Right Reverend Fathers in God' rise as one man, the noble champions of the faith, and, much as they dislike controversial preaching, recommend all their clergy to preach, disseminate tracts, &c., against the 'mother of abominations,' and so forth. On Sunday I could not help saying, at the end of my sermon, 'I have purposely abstained from entering on the subject upon which the public mind is nearly frantic; I could easily have roused your indignation and inflamed passions, but for myself I do not like that kind of work. Assume, if you will, in the week, the attitude of defiance; but let us, for one Sabbath-day, keep free from that, and take the attitude of humiliation.' The subject of the sermon was, 'I am a sinful man, O Lord!'

Thursday.

To-day was spent in a long-protracted meeting at the Town Hall, on the subject of the Papal division of England into dioceses; it was crammed to the windowsills. I went determined not to say a word; but, after two persons had spoken, several voices called out my name: this was repeated so often, becoming clamorous at last, that at the close of the day, in an evil hour, I rose. I heartily wish now I had not, for I was unprepared and hampered, partly by seeing a Romanist there, a former friend, for whom my heart winced at every severe expression, and partly from disagreement with the words of the address. Afterwards I had a long conversation with M— (discussion, rather), which lasted until two or three in the morning. At last I said, 'Now, M—, it is not often one man lets another see the core of his heart: I do not mean to let you see mine, but I have told you much of my views. You know what I do not believe, and what I do. You would call my creed meagre—I call it large, for there are many points on which I am in perplexity. What I believe, I believe strongly. You have heard me preach, too. You saw that crowd; you know what it

costs me to address them ; now tell me, as an old friend, would you advise me to go on or retire ?' He said, with enthusiasm, 'I do not hesitate one moment—go on. I tell you frankly, there were points in your sermon I did not quite agree with. I wished the evangelical element had been there ; but I felt, if it were only there—no, I cannot tell you what I feel, for it would look like extravagant flattery. I will only say, I felt it would be a glorious thing for a man to stand up as you stand in a place like Brighton : but, never mind, perhaps it is better as it is. Men come to hear you who would not come if you thought as I do.' I verily believed that if M—— had only said 'Retire,' I should have retired forthwith.

The year closed for him heavily. His health had visibly decayed. He suffered keenly, though he denied it, from the loneliness of his position. A gloom deepened over his heart. But now and then a gleam of happiness shot across his spirit when he learnt that he had done some good to a human soul. Two letters which touched him greatly are inserted here ; they complete the history of this period :—

An Anonymous Letter, enclosing a Present of 10s.

REV. SIR,—An humble individual begs the acceptance of the enclosed as an Easter offering, and as a grateful acknowledgment, in some sort, for the many wise lessons he has received of truth, honour, clarity, and love ; and for the hope of immortality with which he is *now* impressed, which has begotten a cheerfulness of mind to which for years he has been a stranger.

May God in His infinite mercy long spare you to us in health and prosperity, and bless you ! is the sincere wish of, faithfully yours,

THE WRITER.

An Anonymous Letter, accompanying a Pair of Candlesticks, the Work of the Writer.

SIR,—A humble individual, desirous of acknowledging the *unflinching* kindness you have shown towards the working classes of this town, begs the acceptance of the enclosed ; and, in doing so, he hopes you will pardon what I am afraid you will think an un-English way of sending a note without a name. My apology must be, that as you do not know me, you will not put any wrong construction as to my motive in doing so. Nothing but the profoundest respect would have induced me to take the liberty I have.

Believing you to be a *man* as well as a gentleman, that you can come down to the level of working men, and *understand* them (a rare qualification now-a-days in one in the class that circumstances have placed you), all working men think it so much the more valuable to have your advice and assistance. May it long be continued !

I do not complain that we have not the sympathy of the upper classes. I believe we have ; but there is not one in fifty that can come down to our circumstances, to the bond of our common nature—to comprehend that although the mechanic and artisan of this country are deep thinkers, yet they often stand in need of advice and the assistance that education gives. We have their good wishes and pecuniary assistance—thanks for it—but sometimes a little kindly advice would do far more. It is this difference that makes us feel we could grasp you by the hand as a brother in the cause of progress of the nation. Would that there were more such ! How much more would true religion, morals, and sound intellect be brought out ! No fear then of the Pope or the devil.

Believe me, Sir, I am very respectfully yours.

Letters from October, 1849, to December, 1850.

XXXIX.

October 17, 1849.

I have just finished 'Feats on the Fiord.' Miss Martineau's graphic powers are uncommon. I seem to see a Fiord, like a valley spread with water into the land; the vast flocks of wild fowl; the sun only dipping in summer below the horizon; the outline of the reindeer on the mountain, cut against the sky, and the Lapp slyly running off with the cheese laid on the mountain-ridge as an offering to Nipen. A Lapp's hut must, I think, resemble an alp for filth, and be somewhat like it altogether. An alp is a Tyrolese herdsman's hut. On the mountains there are patches of vegetation among the pine-forests; these in winter are covered with snow, but in the summer months afford pasture for cattle. The herdsmen ascend, having under their charge the cows of several lowland farmers. Each superintends the cattle of many farms. They milk them, make cheese, and at the end of the season each farmer receives a number of cheeses, in proportion to the number of cows that he contributes. I never knew what filth was until I tried to breakfast, when chamois-hunting, in an alp. I had taken bread with me, and endeavoured to improve it by the addition of cream, butter, and cheese; but the room was nearly ankle deep in dirt, the human beings in it scarcely tolerable within six yards; the cream black and white in about equal proportions, from the soot which had fallen in; the butter kneaded up with hair, as mortar sometimes is; and the cheese yielded to scarcely anything less violent than a hatchet. I fancy the four-feet-high Lapps would feel quite at home in an alp.

What I like in Miss Martineau, too, is her genial heart—her willingness to 'live and let live.' She feels the falsehood and the injury of religious superstitions. She has no false sentiment about their romantic beauty. They take the manhood from the

breast, the self-reliance and the trust in God—leaving behind a restless attempt to propitiate fickle, capricious, malicious beings, whose only superiority lies in power. The worship of power singly is always a degrading worship; submission to caprice is always demoralising—submission producing trickiness, subtlety, and trust in cunning rather than in rectitude. All this Miss Martineau sees; yet, whether it be heathen or Christian superstition, she nearly always has a healthy and just allowance for the necessary admixture of error with all that is human, and sees that not by anathemas, but by gradual enlightenment, such errors are to be expelled. In short, she sees the difference between pernicious error and wilful vice.

I began that book at sunrise, and finished it a little after breakfast-time. It gave me a healthy glow of feeling, a more cheerful view of life. I believe the writer of that book would rejoice that she had soothed and invigorated one day of a wayworn, tired being in his path to the Still Country, where the heaviest-laden lays down his burden at last, and has Rest.

Yet, thank God! there is rest—many an interval of saddest, sweetest rest—even here, when it seems as if evening breezes from that other land, laden with fragrance, played upon the cheeks and lulled the heart. There are times, even on the stormy sea, when a gentle whisper breathes softly as of heaven, and sends into the soul a dream of ecstasy which can never again wholly die, even amidst the jar and whirl of waking life. How such whispers make the blood stop and the very flesh creep with a sense of mysterious communion! How singularly such moments are the epochs of life—the few points that stand out prominently in the recollection after the flood of years has buried all the rest, as all the low shore disappears, leaving only a few rock-points visible at high tide!

XL.

October 18, 1849.

I have been pondering over your question

On Tragedy.

as to the probable effect of tragedies such as 'Phèdre,' etc., upon the mind. Now, Aristotle's deep view of the end of the tragic drama is this: that it aims, through the medium of two feelings which it represents in action—terror and fear—to refine those very feelings in the spectators. To refine, of course, means to take off the rudeness and painfulness of such emotions, and make them almost pleasing sensations. That is, the terrible and pathetic in real life are painful things to witness; but in the mimic representation the worst part is taken away by the consciousness that it is unreal, at the same time that it is sufficiently like life to produce an impression somewhat similar to that which would be called forth by reality. The feeling thus made faint becomes pleasurable, just as warmth is enjoyment, though heat be intolerable. Of course it is plain that this refinement of feeling unrealises it—unfits for the contemplation of the terrible and pathetic in real life—substitutes the mimic emotion which is useless, a merely artificial production, for the true one which the Creator has appointed to rise in the bosom in such circumstances for the express purpose of leading to action, exciting sympathy, hardening against danger, and so on. A person who is refined by high-wrought scenes in novels is necessarily sure to shrink from such scenes in real life, because in the mimic case he had all the excitement without the pain, and he will turn aside from circumstances where excitement cannot be had without pain. And such a one is sure to be found wanting when true feeling is required for use, because the feelings have got the habit of being roused, without leading to exertion. They have got this habit in the unreal, and they will keep to it in the real. They will rise at the sight of distress or pain: but they have never been trained to pass promptly into the work of sympathising and relieving, and accordingly such persons seem and come to be looked upon as callous amidst the trials of others over which they wept in

the romance. This, I fancy, is Aristotle's 'refinement' of feeling, and this must be the danger in all refinement of society. The tragedy and the romance, therefore, only begin to appear when the mind of a large portion of the nation is at leisure to cultivate hothouse feelings, which are always feeble monstrosities. The bull-fight and the amphitheatre only begin when war and the chase have ended. The emotions which found in these a healthy exercise once, get their unhealthy repast by seeing without any call for acting.

It is plain to me that in this way all such reading is injurious to the generality. All the feeling we can command we want for acting. When we come to act, the feeling is not there to make acting easy; and what we have to do we must either leave undone or do with a cold heart, simply from having been accustomed to train the feelings to refinement, and not to action.

I wish that nature could do her own healthy work upon all our hearts. I could conceive a marvellously healing power to come from opening the soul, like a child's, to receive spontaneously, without effort, the impressions of the unliving—and yet how living!—world around us with all the awe that accompanies them.

One impulse from a vernal wood
Will teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Also I suspect that speculative philosophy is not good to read, however interesting; at all events, not alone. It has too little of a basis of proved fact to rest upon, and depends for its truth too much upon feeling. Positive science, such as chemistry, natural philosophy, mineralogy, and geology, rests on facts: and the effect of certainty which it produces on the mind is always a healthy feeling. Here again it is as I said above. The cure is, to come in contact with Nature and with Fact, instead of exhausting strength by mighty blows struck at random on the yielding air, in the region of conjecture and bewildering mystery. I love that region;

it is indeed the region of Faith ; but it requires a brain practised much on more earthly precipices to avoid being dizzy and lost in the immense abyss.

XLI.

October 19.

I am convinced there is a deep truth in the strict view which many take of the observance of Sunday. I am *certain* that their arguments are wrong—that the Sabbath is not a perpetual obligation ; that it was Jewish, and that it passed away with Christianity, which made all days and places holy.

Nevertheless, I am more and more sure by experience that the reason for the observance of the Sabbath lies deep in the everlasting necessities of human nature, and that as long as man is man the blessedness of keeping it, not as a day of rest only, but as a day of spiritual rest, will never be annulled. Almost everything may become an object of doubt ; but, in the midst of a wilderness of shadows, broken and distorted in every way, of one thing I am certain—one thing is real—the life of God in the soul of man. I am quite sure that there is One who is seeking us rather than sought by us, that He will seek and find the earnest ; and I am sure that this hidden communion may become an object of actual experience as soon as the seeking is reciprocal. If I have not yet acted on it, I know that not with the intellect, but with the spirit, man finds God ; in other words, by that which is allied to God in our souls, we touch Him. The Jews required ‘a sign,’ that is, something that would prove God to their sensuous nature. The Greeks sought after wisdom ; that is, by reason and mental tension they expected to realise the Divine : but St. Paul’s conviction was, that the spiritual man alone—that is, the man who sought with his spirit—could understand the things of God. By the spirit, I suppose, he means that which I called above, the part in our nature which is allied to God, which shows itself, not

in cleverness and nimbleness of apprehension, but in devotion, in the submissive heart, in gentleness, humbleness, and love. I fancy that Sunday has lost its meaning, unless this part of our being is called into energy. I have been beating the air in vain with investigation. The true way was much nearer. Not by soaring high or diving low do we get the Anointer, but by something very near to us—trusting. Is not that the substance of those verses which so many people find difficult, Romans x. 6, 7, 8, 9 ?

I could not quite satisfy myself with the desolate feeling which instinctively I feel as often as you talk of resolving to fix your heart on God alone. Is not this that which ought to make me supremely happy ? But as I was walking in the town to-day, in a back street, and musing over this, I detected the reason of it not doing so at once. God is Life, not Death : He is not to be found, as the Legion-haunted tried to find Him, among the tombs. I do think that the spirit in which you sometimes despondingly speak of living for Him alone, really means nothing more than the burial alive of a nun who is taking the black veil and thinking to become thus the spouse of Christ. You speak of living for God and with God, as if it were dying to all that is bright, and cheering, and beautiful, and blessed. You speak as one would speak of going into a parish union, which is good only when there is nothing else to do. No wonder that, involuntarily and almost without a distinct analysis of the feeling, I feel a kind of shudder and a vague cheerlessness when you talk so. No ; be *voulez* if you will, but it must be *au blanc*, with more cheerful and more grateful tones—not as if to serve God and to hear the eternal prison-doors clank behind you were identical. Serve Him, love Him, live to Him, and you will be bright and full of hope, and noble. ‘They shall renew their strength.’ The heart vainly pants ‘for some celestial fruit, forbidden to our wants.’ Yes, but how unjust and unreasonable to complain if our

expectations are not fulfilled ! A sailor, I fancy, would not have a right to count himself of a superior order of beings, if he sat dripping on a rock, and pined for wings instead of sails. Sails are not so swift as wings, and are much more coarse : but there is nothing for it but to patiently content himself with his limitations, and humbly follow in the wake of the laws of nature, making such use of wind and steam as the constitution of his being permits—and not look up, envying the sea-birds in the air. That will not get him on many knots an hour, I fancy. And besides, even with wings, *they* will live and die gulls ; whereas the very limits that cramp *him* call out the energies of a day-by-day diviner manhood.

XLII.

MY DEAR —, —A woman's position is one of subjection, mythically described as a curse in the Book of Genesis. Well, but I ween that all curses are blessings in disguise. Labour among thorns and thistles—man's best health. Woman's subjection ? What say you to His ? 'Obedient,' a 'servant ;' *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him. Methinks a thoughtful, high-minded Woman would scarcely feel degraded by a lot which assimilates her to the divinest Man : 'He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' I have always conceived that you had learned to count that ministry the sublimest life which the world has seen, and its humiliation and subjection precisely the features which were most divine. The Greeks at Corinth wanted that part to be left out, and it was exactly that part which Paul would not leave out—Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ *crucified*, which the Evangelicals rob of all its beauty. Trust me, a noble woman laying on herself the duties of her sex, while fit for higher things—the world has nothing to show more like the Son of Man than that. Do you remember Wordsworth's beautiful lines to Milton ?—

Thy soul was as a star, and dwelt apart ;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the
 sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness : *and yet thy heart*
The lowliest duties on itself did lay.

I do not know anything of Alfieri's 'Life.' By whom is it written ? The misfortunes of genius, its false direction, its misery, I suppose rise partly from the fact of the life of genius being that which is chiefly given to the world. Many a soldier died as bravely and with as much suffering as Sir John Moore at Corunna ; but every soldier had not a Wolfe to write his death-song. Many an innocent victim perished—yes, by hundreds of thousands—on the scaffolds of France, and in the dungeons of the robber barons, but they died silently. A few aristocrats whose shriek was loud have filled the world with pity at the tale of their suffering. Many a mediocre boy have I seen spoilt at school—many a commonplace destiny has been marred in life : only these things are not matters of history. Peasants grow savage with domestic troubles, and washerwomen pine under brutal treatment : but the former are locked up for burying their misery in drunkenness—the latter die of a broken heart, with plenty of unwritten poetry lost among the soapsuds. I fancy the *inarticulate* sorrows are far more pitiable than those of an Alfieri, who has a tongue to utter them. Carlyle in this respect seems to me to hold a tone utterly diverse from that of the Gospel. The worship of the hero, that is his religion : condescension to the small and unknown, that was His !

A little plan which I have found serviceable in past years, is to put down every night the engagements and duties of the next day, arranging the hours well. The advantages of this are several. You get more done than if a great part of each day is spent in contriving and considering 'what next ?' A healthful feeling pervades the whole of life. There is a feeling of satisfaction at the end of the day on finding that, generally, the greater part of what is

planned has been accomplished. This is the secret of giving dignity to trifles. As units they are insignificant; they rise in importance when they become parts of a plan. Besides this—and I think the most important thing of all—there is gained a consciousness of Will, the opposite of that which is the sense of impotency. The thought of time, to me at least, is a very overpowering and often a very annihilating one for energy: Time rushing on, unbroken, irresistible, hurrying the worlds and the ages into being, and out of it, and making our ‘noisy years seem moments in the *being* of the eternal Silence.’ The sense of powerlessness which this gives is very painful. But I have felt that this is neutralised by such a little plan as that. You feel that you do control your own course; you are borne on, but not resistlessly. Down the rapids you go, certainly, but you are steering and trimming your own raft, and making the flood of Time your vassal, and not your conqueror. I first, I think, began this plan after reading a valuable little book, and a sunny, cheerful one, Abbot’s ‘Way to do Good.’ It has been omitted for years, but I have begun it again these last few days.

‘There is nothing in the drudgery of domestic duties to soften,’—you quote that. No, but a great deal to strengthen with the sense of duty done, self-control, and power. Besides, you cannot calculate how much corroding rust is *kept off*—how much of disconsolate, dull despondency is hindered. Daily use is not the jeweller’s mercurial polish: but it will keep your little silver pencil from tarnishing.

I have been interrupted by the visit of a lady of my congregation, who came to take leave; one, it appears, who has been warmly attached to the instruction given there. She told me the delight, the tears of gratitude, which she had witnessed in a poor girl to whom, in passing, I gave a kind look on going out of church on Sunday. What a lesson! How cheaply happiness can be given! What opportunities we miss of

doing an angel’s work! I remember doing it, full of sad feelings, passing on, and thinking no more about it; and it gave an hour’s sunshine to a human life, and lightened the load of life to a human heart—for a time!

XLIII.

October 24.

I have just returned from Lady G——’s—a party of ten or twelve to dinner. Conversation after, chiefly military, turning on Indian battles; so I talked. Afterwards had a discussion with Mr. — about the post-office regulation of transmitting letters on Sunday, in opposition to which there is to be a meeting to-morrow. I maintained the difficulty of the question: he asserted its facility. I instanced the case of my being thrown out for the last train on Saturday night; what would have been done had there been no train on Sunday morning? The inestimable value of a day of physical repose and spiritual rest is granted; but the details of that must be modified by circumstances. Sailors must work a ship on Sundays; ships must arrive on Sundays; battles must be fought; news must travel. Life and death, or—what is equivalent—property to an immense amount, must often be involved, if the business of a great country, and much of the correspondence, receives a sudden shock in the metropolis and all country towns. Two days in the week there would be no delivery. Moreover, it is a matter of degree. The question is not an easy one. For, on the other hand, the compulsory working of so many thousands on the day of rest is almost identical with smothering the life of religion in the soul. I certainly do feel by experience the eternal obligation because of the eternal necessity of the sabbath. The soul withers without it; it thrives in proportion to the fidelity of its observance. Nay, I even believe the stern rigour of the Puritan Sabbath had a grand effect upon the soul. Fancy a man thrown in upon himself, with no permitted music, nor re-

laxation, nor literature, nor secular conversation—nothing but his Bible, his own soul, and God's silence! What hearts of iron this system must have made. How different from our stuffed-arm-chair religion and 'gospel of comfort!' as if to be made comfortable were the great end of religion. I am persuaded, however, that the Sabbath must rest, not on an enactment, but on the necessities of human nature. It is necessary not because it is commanded; but it is commanded because it is necessary. If the Bible, says, 'Eat the herb of the field,' self-sustenance does not become a duty in consequence of the enactment, but the enactment is only a statement of the law of human nature. And so with the Sabbath; and this appears to be a truer and a far more impregnable base to place it on. For as to the enactment, great part of it is indisputably dispensed with. The day, the mode of observance, the manner of computing the twenty-four hours from twelve to twelve, or from sunset to sunset. If these be ceremonial, who is to prove that the number one in seven is not ceremonial too, and that it might not be changed for one in ten? If all this is got rid of, and 'no manner of work' is construed to permit hot dinners and fly-driving on the Sabbath, then it is only an arbitrary distinction to call any other part, or even the whole of it, of moral and eternal instead of ceremonial obligation. You cannot base it on a law: but you can show that the law was based on an eternal fitness. There I think it never can be dislodged.

XLIV.

I have been dining at Mr. E——'s, and escaped at 9.20; a pleasant party enough; that is, there were a good many intelligent men, and the conversation was of a better order than usual. Mr. E—— remarked, in conversation, that our Lord never once used irony. I alleged Mark vii. 9: 'Full well ye reject,' etc., which, after a long discussion, and the production of Greek Testaments, etc., was universally admitted

to be decisive. Then came the maxim, that the indignation expressed by Him against hypocrisy was no precedent for us, inasmuch as He spoke as a Divine person. A gentleman of the name of —— maintained this. I contended that it was human, and that if a man did not feel something of the same spirit under similar circumstances, if his blood could not boil with indignation, nor the syllable of withering justice rise to his lips, he could not even conceive His spirit. Mr. E—— agreed to this, to my surprise, and told an anecdote. 'Could you not have felt indignation for that, Robertson?' My blood was at the moment running fire—not at his story, however; and I remembered that I had once in my life stood before my fellow-creature with words that scathed and blasted; once in my life I felt a terrible might; I knew, and rejoiced to know, that I was inflicting the sentence of a coward's and a liar's hell.

I feel most as I should be when my mind is in the attitude of—do you remember the dear old simile of Shelley, which I have not quoted for so long, though it has been again and again in my meditations; that I used to quote so often? There is something in the feeling of that simile that is quite after my own heart: the solemn night, the purity of the thread of light, the Divine compassion of the placid Thing above, the quiet devoted sadness of the solitary inhabitant of night and air below, a butterfly in all but gaudiness. No, I have not given the serene feeling and sacred sensations of the simile. It is quite peculiar, and I have repeated it to myself a thousand times. Resignation was the word I wanted. The homage of resignation beneath the clear pale sky of night, with Eternity and Immensity all round, imparting themselves to the look upwards. It is all in vain, I do not express it. Shelley's single line says it all. The sound of the words responds to the thought and image which they suggest. I cannot tell you what a stillness they produce in me, and how entirely, more than anything I know, they *image* what I feel.

I have been asked to go to Switzerland, and a man ought to go there to feel intensely at least once in his life. The only question is, it will scarcely be possible for me to exceed seven Sundays of absence.

I fear it is not possible, but what a dream! The valley of Rosenlauri, that loveliest of earthly spots; the stern grandeur of the Grimsel, where the wildest and loneliest thoughts were in my heart four years ago; and the fall of the Aar at Handek, where I got a sensation new in life; or the spots of the Tyrol, where I wandered for long weeks alone. For a time I almost think I would give up the rest of the year, anything for that. But, no; a few weeks soon pass, though they leave behind a memory which tints all existence, and apparently absorb all existence into themselves.

XLV.

MY DEAR—, —I implore you, do not try morphine ever; no, not once. I will trust you not to do so, not to take any opiate whatever. I ask it humbly. Pledge me your word that you will honourably comply with this, in the letter and in the spirit too. It is a wicked and cowardly attempt to rule the spirit by the flesh. It is beneath you. If you do it I can honour you no longer; the results upon the system are slow, sure, and irreparable, and the habit grows until it is unconquerable. I am deeply, anxiously in earnest. You are not worthy the fidelity of my friendship if you try to drown misery that way. Except in the grossness of the effect, where is the difference between the opiate and the dram? Do you not know what keeps the gin palaces open?—Misery! The miserable go there to forget. You must not and shall not do it, for it is degradation. I would have you condescend to no miserable materialism to escape your sorrow. Remember what Maria Theresa said when she began to dose in dying, 'I want to meet my God awake.' Remember that He refused the medicated opiate on the cross.

Meet misery awake. May I borrow sacred words?—'Having begun in the spirit, do not be made perfect through the flesh.' Summon the force to bear out of your own heart, and the divine that dwells there—not out of a laudanum bottle. I have spoken ruggedly, but not rudely. Forgive me; I am not myself to-night; I would gladly sustain the depression I feel by an opiate, or by anything else; but I resist, because it is despicable.

XLVI.

Another Sunday done: crowded congregations, pulpit steps even full, ante-room nearly so. Morning, the Sabbath subject; the afternoon, the conclusion of Acts xviii. I sat in church thinking, 'Now, how this crowd would give many men pleasure, flatter their hearts with vanity, or fill them with honest joy! How strange that it is given to one who cannot enjoy it, who takes no pains to keep it, who would gladly give all up, and feels himself in the midst of all a homeless and heartless stranger!' In the afternoon, for a few minutes, gentler thoughts came, and there was a rush of warmer, perhaps better feeling in some parts of my sermon, where I was speaking of Apollon's character—brilliant and gifted, yet sitting humbly to be taught by Priscilla; and also where St. Paul, taking a vow, seemed to indicate that there was in his heart a lingering attachment to the ceremonies, and even the superstitions, hallowed by early associations.

* * * *

— has been here since eight o'clock. He had been reading Fichte's 'Blessed Life.' We had a long talk about it; he is but a beginner in these matters, but was deeply interested. I will tell you a thought which came out in conversation, and which I expressed. Fichte seems to discountenance attachment to the individual and the visible. The clinging which to cut away would be cutting the heart to the quick, he would call an indication of a mind not set on the Invisible. And yet how is this?

Then they who feel least, and attach themselves least, are the religious of the earth. The gentlest and tenderest, who have forgotten self in the being of another, are consoled with the pleasing assurance that 'they have neither part nor lot' in the blessed life. And He, whose tears flowed so freely over the grave of friendship, and over his country's doomed metropolis, who loved John with so peculiar and selective an attachment—what are we to say of Him? Oh! it cannot be. It cannot be, that God has given us beings here to love, and that to love them intensely is idolatry. I can understand self-annihilation for another dearer than self; but I cannot understand the annihilation of those dear affections, nor the sacrifice of a bleeding heart at the shrine of Him whose name is Love. I do not, however, comprehend anything of the matter. It is all dark. I do not understand why the tenderer the heart is, the more it is exposed to be torn, and rent, and tortured. Separations, bereavements, deaths, broken hearts—there is something very stern in the aspect of this world, when you penetrate below the superficial smile it wears—very stern, and every day makes life a more *serious* thing, more suggestive of grave thought. Then, the next moment there is, perhaps, a burst of lightheartedness, unworthy of one who thinks and feels; but here again Elena's lay in 'Philip Van Artevelde' gives the true account of that:

The human heart cannot sustain, etc.

And that very provision for happiness or lightness, in spite of such serious thought, seems to give us glimpses of the truth that Love sits at the helm of this dark world's course, after all. Else Talleyrand's hideous sneer might be almost believed: 'the happy are they who have hard hearts, and hard'—how shall I euphonize it?—'peptic powers.'

XLVII.

I rather agree with the view of St. Paul having taken, personally, a low estimate of women. It seems to me inseparable from his temperament. I had a friend full of

fire and ardour like St. Paul, though wanting his tenderness, who was blessed or unblessed with the same gift as St. Paul, and he spoke in the same way—not contemptuously, for he liked to be soothed and flattered by them—but as if they were born to be helpmeets for man, and that chiefly. That respectful chivalry of feeling which characterises some men can only exist where that is found which St. Paul lacked, and which was in many respects a gift; still, no man can lack any one of the feelings of humanity, however much misery he may escape by it, without loss in some other respect. It is a matter of great interest, and even awe, to me, to observe how the nobler feelings can exist in their intensity only where the whole nature, the lower too, is intense also; and how that which is in itself low and mean becomes sublimated into something that is celestial. Hence, in the highest natures I suppose goodness will be the result of tremendous struggle; just as the 'bore,' which is nothing in the Thames, becomes a convulsion on the Ganges, where the waters of a thousand miles roll like a sea to meet the incoming tide of the ocean.

I never, however, could reconcile that coldness of nature in St. Paul with the singular fire and passion of his character, nor with his remarkable and exuberant tenderness. Men are divided into three classes—the irascible or passionate temperament, the sensual, and the melancholy. St. Paul belonged to the first, which is no doubt the finest, and, on the whole, the happiest.

Poor —! The secret, however, of his scepticism seems to have been crime; or was the crime the result of scepticism? For when the soul is tossed over *that* sea, without a chart, and without a polar star, it is almost at the mercy of any fitful gust of passion. I cannot blame severely what others so condemn—the bitterness of that sarcasm in the —. People often mistake a contortion of anguish for a diabolical grin. Often the cry of despair is taken for

a shout of savage triumph; many a brave man, and tender withal, has struck a woman ruthlessly her death-blow. Yes, but then the man was drowning. No one can understand the horrid laugh of hopelessness which delights to scatter its scorn on the falsehoods which are deluding others, after they are proved falsehoods, but he who has felt the ice of doubt cracking beneath his feet, and seen himself alone on a single ice-block, severed from mankind. I do not excuse, but I can understand both the want of reverence and the immoral life which result from such despair.

XLVIII.

October.

MY DEAR —, —I know little of the Countess Hahn Hahn or Frederica Bremer, but I can easily understand that the female character is very different in those places from here. Tennyson, I remember, in his 'Princess,' which I have not in my possession to refer to, but shall get to-day, draws the distinction well between the characters of the north and south:—

Oh, swallow, swallow, swallow flying south.
'Dark, tender, true,' I think, are the epithets he applies to the north:—

And dark and true and tender is the north.
The south, of course, passionate, impulsive, brief-lived in feeling. I believe the former makes the nobler character. At least, it has been given to the north again and again to regenerate the worn-out south by the infusion of nobler blood and more vigorous intellect. In the estimate formed of women, I should think there cannot be a doubt which is the truer and deeper—that which makes her a plaything, or that which surrounds her with the sacredness of a silent worship. A temperament like that of St. Paul's is happier, and for the world more useful. . . .

Still I think that tone of mind, which could only be found in the north, only confers the power of suffering—dignified suffering if you will, but only suffering. In

one or two cases here and there you meet with those 'whose hearts the holy forms of young imagination have kept pure.' But commonly, I believe, the very purity of these aspirations becomes a dangerous gift. They lie very close to what is wrong, they transform themselves very easily into tempters—Lucifers cast down from heaven. Tenderness transmutes itself into something allied, yet different; disappointment becomes heart ruin. Do you remember in the 'Arabian Nights' the story of the princess gifted with supernatural power—using it always nobly—blowing flames of fire at the genie, and reduced to a heap of ashes in the conflict by her own fire the very moment after victory? It is all very mysterious. The sons of dust crawl plodding on in safety to their journey's end; and they who aspire to guide the fire coursers of the sun, or float through heaven on wings of waxen purity, are precipitated into ruin, or else left in cold dank seas of disappointment.

XLIX.

October 30.

Walking down Regency Square, about four o'clock, I was struck by the singular beauty of the sky. Two mighty continents of cloud stretched from above me in parallel lines towards the horizon above the sea, where they seemed to meet. A river of purest blue, broad above my head, narrow by perspective in the distance, ran between them, seeming to lave their shores. Each of them had a rim or edge of bright gold, as if the river were rippling and glistening on the banks; and innumerable islets of gold were dotted along both shores; the parallelism of them, producing that effect of perspective which you see in an avenue of trees, gave a strong perception of the boundlessness of the distance into which they stretched away. Looking at sky and clouds, you scarcely estimate distance. The vault seems very measurable, and it does not occur to you that clouds which appear only a few yards in length are really

acres and acres of vapour. This combination of forms, however, forced me to realise the immensity of space, and a deeper sense of grandeur and loveliness came to me than I have felt for many weeks. It has always been so. When I have not *perfect* union with humanity, I find in trees and clouds, and forms and colours of things inanimate, more that is congenial, more that I can inform with my own being, more that speaks to me—than in my own species. There is something in the mere posture of looking up which gives a sense of grandeur; and that, I suppose, is the reason why all nations have localised heaven there, and peopled the sky with Deity.

* * * *

I have received a letter from — today. It is full of hope and touching in all its misery! Her sorrows have been great, and her trials are severe. She has attempted to find peace in the patristic system, which she recommends to me, but it is quite plain that she has tried it in vain. I replied that I knew the system pretty well, having studied it once with anxiety; that I doubted not it had in it a remedy for those who could believe it; that I was not prepared to say that to them it was not a real remedy, for the form of error often conceals a truth, and to many minds presents the truth only, the wrapping being instinctively rejected, as the grape-skin or sugar-cane fibre is rejected by the palate when the sweetness of which they are but the vehicle has been extracted; that even of the worst of Romish errors the same might be said, as, for instance, Mariolatry contains the sublime truth of the adorableness and heavenliness of female purity; but that no act of volition could extract this nutriment from error when the conscience recognised it as error; that to adopt a system because others who believed it earnestly have had their spiritual nature nurtured by it, to believe it for the sake of the advantage of it, must fail; that it would be destruction to the moral being; that I

would rather live solitary on the most desolate crag—shivering, with all the warm wraps of falsehood stripped off, gazing after unfound truth—where ‘bird doth not find bush, nor insect wing flit over the herbless granite,’—than sit comfortably on more inhabited spots, where others are warm in a faith which is true to them, but which is false to me. I said this to her more concisely in a few lines.

* * * *

I went out this afternoon to get some fresh air, and cool a little feverishness. After a walk I bent my steps to the spot most congenial to my feelings at that time, the churchyard at Hove. It was quite dark, but the moon soon rose and shed a quiet light upon the long church and the white tombstones. I went in, and was pleased to hear not a single human sound far or near. The moon was rising, like glowing copper, through the smoke at Brighton. Above there were a few dense clouds, edged with light, sailing across a marvellous blue, which softened towards the zenith into a paler and more pearly cobalt, with clear innocent stars here and there looking down so chaste and pure. I heard nothing but the sea; that, however, very distinctly, chanting no ‘sea psalm,’ but falling with a most dissonant heavy endless clang upon the shore. It found for me the expression I could not put in words.

I went to the tomb, and stood beside it quietly for some time. I felt no bitterness—infinite pity and tenderness—that was predominant. I did not kneel to pray; I do not know why. I passed E. M—’s tomb, and paused one moment. The bridegroom lies beneath the hillock where so many fell at Chillianwallah; the bride is desolate. Two who were there are dead, both young. That marriage and that death are singularly joined in my mind, for poor E— was planning her own wedding then, and settling that I should marry her. Young R—, too, has gone, but I do not envy

any of them, except the soldier, perhaps. I wish I had been with my own gallant, wondrous regiment in that campaign.

L.

November 5.

Keble on this occasion is scarcely equal to himself.* The connection is forced. The mountain boy, getting hardened by years, is very indistinctly linked with the thought of unforgiveness; nor do I see why a mountain boy is peculiarly called upon for the exercise of that grace. Besides the 'blest restraint' is not one calculated at all to produce any real elevation of character. It is little more than an animal existence, and all those notions of peasant purity and pastoral innocence are miserably false and sentimental. They belong rather to the heathen times of Corydon and Amaryllis than the more true Christian conception of a new birth into goodness and progressive excellence by knowledge of evil and hatred of it. If the mountain boy had lived in that narrow 'blessed range' all his life, I suspect his perception of the beauty of the 'snow-clad peaks of rosy light' would have been very dim and dull indeed. It is education which draws out the beauty of these things. I fancy my little Charles would see more beauty in his regiment of leaden soldiers than in the sublimest view in Switzerland.

Oh, lady, we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live.

A child's glance on nature is void of rapture, unless, by some unfortunate precocity of constitution, feeling is very early developed; especially a boy's glance, to whom a beautiful hill is rather a fine place for a scamper, or a good cover for grouse, than a place for sensibility to expatiate in. The sense of the loveliness of nature comes with the first susceptibility of the spell of woman. I have little doubt that the 'thwarting cliffs' were never called by so poetical a name as 'thwarting' by the young

* Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

gentleman of the hills, until he found his rudeness checked by the vigorous chastisement of Peggy's delicate fingers making his ears tingle. 'Altered day dreams;' why, the dreams of boyhood are nothing to the dreams of manhood. The mysteries of this unintelligible world, and the solemn beauty and wonder of existence, do not begin in their fulness until the heart has begun to lose itself in 'life's seducing wild.'

* * * *

I do not quite know what to say about Carlyle. Sure I am that his mind has had more influence on the thoughtful young men of the day than any other I could name. His thought is more moulded into many of the leading Americans' thought, and his power has told more upon the tone of feeling amongst the most highly educated manufacturers than that of any, I suppose, in England; and I am not prepared to think that that is an attribute of mere talent. Formative influence is a prerogative of genius; but the truth is, that talent, at least, often becomes nearly as intuitive as genius. When the mind is stored with a vast variety of thoughts, which by digestion it has made its own, it is wonderful how rapid by habit those combinations become, which we generally attribute to genius only. Then again, as Carlyle says of Mirabeau, who was charged with using other men's materials, 'to make other men's thoughts really your own, and not simply reproduce them, is an evidence of genius. Why did they not make as much use of the raw material of their own thoughts as he did?'

L.I.

I will quote a passage which has struck me:—

'The true art of moral culture is to balance extravagant tendencies by quickening those which are languid. Growth is a safer means of producing harmony in character than repression.' How often have I felt and said this! You cannot

descend to the regions of the lower nature, and wrestle with success there. You must go above and fight them, as Perseus fought the dragon that would have destroyed Andromeda, on wings in the air. The lower is subdued, not by repression, but by making it simply an instrument of the higher. No fasting, for instance, will make the soul pure; but a noble attachment will keep all baser feelings in check and ennoble them. By the bye, that is a better remedy than Cato's; that was the very essence of St. Paul's system; that was the gospel according to him. Not repression, coercion, law—that only produces dreadful conflict. 'Ye cannot do the things ye would.' 'Walk in the spirit'—the higher life of loftier motives—'and then ye will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh!' and that is true particularly as well as generally. No court-martial or provost-marshal's cord would stop thieving in a regiment, or make a coward brave; but an *esprit de corps* and honour have done it again and again.

I am quite sure that is the real answer to Tractarianism and Sabbatarianism. Those systems, 'as systems,' will not produce animals as noble even as the dog is, though I admit there are some of the noblest of the species hampered by them, and also that some who never can be made noble require to be kept by them from doing harm.

I sometimes believe that the expression of communion is much more rich and varied where the presence is only that of mind, than when friends are together, and hour after hour passes, each taking for granted that all which he desires to say is understood. The presence which is bodily, soothes and contents, but perhaps for that very reason checks the utterance of thought and feeling, which only becomes articulate from a sense of want. Is not that the history of the origin of speech itself? Is it not want which brings out the child's first tones, and elaborates language as the requirements of men, by

civilisation, become more multiplied and complex? And if we had perfect fulness of all things, the entire beatitude of being without a want, possessing all blessedness within, should we not lapse into the eternal silence of God Himself?

All the utterances of man—his music and his poetry, the heirloom which the gifted have bequeathed to their species—are but the results of a want, of a loneliness which coarser and blunter spirits had been fortunate, or unfortunate, enough not to feel, and which compelled *them* to articulate expressions, like the thirsting baby, in moans, or cries of happiness, as the case might be.

LII.

November 10.

I quite agree with what you say about sympathy produced by fault, but I think you will not find my view inconsistent. I only say that mercy which is shown by us sinners to sinners is either deficient or extravagant. Fair, generous, firm mercy is only shown by One who has been tempted and not erred. I gave three examples—Paul the apostle and David, of severity; the former having not been tempted, and the latter having fallen—one of weak leniency, Saul the king, who sympathised too much with Agag.

Miss — is a kind, true friend, but I do not quite accept what she says about V——'s life being too clumsy and real. No; remember, He had nowhere to lay His head; that was clumsy and real enough. Paul, whom I consider the sublimest of the human race, toiled at tent-making. Elizabeth Fry went into dirty dungeons, and in Ireland would have, with indomitable perseverance, done something in mud hovels. I only wish there were more real coarseness forced into V——'s life. The outward and visible do not always weigh down the inward; but often inward life wants more pressure on it from without to make it salient. The noble frigate looks heavy enough in calm, but springs to the gale,

like a sea-bird, gracefully. Rely upon it, the real poetry of life is found where He found it—in multiplying loaves and fishes, in descending to things so mean as wine required for a feast, in collecting a few rude simple people round Him, in working the earlier part of His existence humbly at the carpenter's trade, in a very homely existence, and V— ought not to talk of submission, or of a nunnery. Did you ever read Blanco White's description of a nun's life and mind—its stagnation, its anile childishness, its over-conscious purity, which is really impurity; its miserable, crushed natural tendencies, and the dreadful revenge nature takes in asserting her rights? Trust me, she who would be wiser than her Maker, is only seeming wise. She who nourishes one part of her being by the extinction of another, is but a stunted monstrosity after all. Let V— be sure that God has given a woman no nobler destiny than that of an abundant home, not the less noble for its trials. Her tone is not a worthy one; it is effeminate, not *feminine*.

I wish to speak firmly. V— would despise me if I did not. He was not a true friend, but a sentimentalist for the moment, who was for taking all the coarseness and *terre-à-terre* life out of the way, that his Divine Friend might lead a languid, poetical life of comfort. I would not be a Satan to her. No. Is a *terre-à-terre* life after all as sharp as the cross? Are howling winds and cold rooms as unpoetical as Pilate's judgment-hall and the rude mock of the ruffian soldiery?

In speaking of 'Knox's Rambles,' and the effects of association with men in sharpening the intellect, you remark that this seems inconsistent with the fact that great spirits have been nursed in solitude. Yes, but not the ploughman's solitude. Moses was forty years in Midian, but he had the education of Egypt before, and habits of thought and observation began, as shown in his spirit of inquiry with regard to the burning forest. Usually, I suppose, the spark has been struck by some

superior mind, either in conversation or through reading. Ferguson was, perhaps, an exception. Then again, stirring times set such master-minds to work even in this solitude, as in Cromwell's case. I remember, too, a line of Goethe's, in which he says:—

Talent forms itself in solitude,
Character in the storms of life.

But I believe both your positions are true. The soul collects its mightiest forces by being thrown in upon itself, and coerced solitude often matures the mental and moral character marvellously, as in Luther's confinement in the Wartburg. Or, to take a loftier example, Paul during his three years in Arabia; or, grander still, His solitude in the desert: the Baptist's too. But, on the other hand, solitude unbroken, from earliest infancy, or with nothing to sharpen the mind, either by collision with other minds, or the expectation of some new sphere of action shortly, would, I suppose, rust the mental energies. Still there is the spirit to be disciplined, humbled, and strengthened, and it may gain in proportion as the mind is losing its sharpening education.

I have just read Keble's hymn for the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity. The last stanza but one is truly consolatory; and those lines about the dead leaves represent a feeling which is irresistible in autumn. I recollect how sometimes the heaps of soft leaves, the fluttering of the falling ones through the air, have brought almost a pang to my heart. Do you know sometimes they have made me think of my mother's grey hairs, with melancholy reminiscences of what she was. The un murmuring way in which the vegetable creation resign their lives is very striking, as a thought, in connection with the great law of being; for by the sacrifice of life, voluntary or involuntary, and by that alone, can other and higher life exist. The mineral soil gives its force to the grass, and the grass its life to the cattle, and they sacrifice theirs for man; all that is involuntary, and

of course there is in it nothing great or good. But voluntary acquiescence in and working with that manifested law or will of God is the very essence of human goodness. Is it not another name for Love?

LIII.

The difference between Moses and Anaxagoras, the Epistles and the 'Excursion,' I believe is in degree. The Light or the Word which dwells in all men, dwells in loftier degree in some than in others, and also is of a nobler kind of inspiration. Bezaleel and Aholiab—artificers—were men inspired we are told. Why they more than other seers of the Beautiful? But who would compare their enlightenment with that which ennobles the life instead of purifying the taste? And, again, who would compare a philosopher, physical or metaphysical, revealing in the one case the laws of matter, and in the other the laws of mind, with the revealer of spiritual truth? Is the *dictum* of Anaxagoras, that all our sense of knowledge is delusive, to be compared with that which Moses reveals—Jehovah is one Lord and Holy? The 'Excursion' reveals some beautiful truths of our moral being; but by how much our spiritual life is higher than our sensitive and moral, so much are the Epistles above the 'Excursion'—higher in kind and higher also in degree of inspiration, for the Apostles claim, in matters spiritual, unerring power of truth. Newton's revelation of the order of the heavens, grand as it was, is inferior to that which we technically call inspiration, by how much one single human soul transcends the whole material universe in value.

I think it comes to this: God is the Father of Lights, and—the King in his beauty, and—the Lord of Love. All our several degrees of knowledge attained in these departments are from Him. One department is higher than another; in each department, too, the degree of knowledge may vary from a glimmering glimpse to

infallibility: so that all is properly inspiration, but immensely differing in value and in degree. If it be replied, that this degrades inspiration by classing it with things so common, the answer is plain: a sponge and a man are both animals, but the degrees between them are almost incalculable.

I think this view of the matter is important, because in the other way some twenty or thirty men in the world's history have had a special communication, miraculous, and from God. In this, all have it, and by devout and earnest cultivation of the mind and heart may have it increased immeasurably. This is really practical.

LIV.

My morning was broken up. I could not go out to Hurst until half an hour before two, just in time to see the children off by the train. There was then an hour and a half to wait for the next train. I sat down upon a bench, and read a small work of Ullmann's, a professor at Heidelberg. It was a wild day, with driving clouds, drizzling rain, and lurid gleams of sunshine at intervals; but warm. It was rather fine to see the black and lead-coloured clouds drifting over the steep sides of the Downs, sometimes so dark and solemn in their march that I felt a kind of awe creeping over me. I am very fond of a *driving* sky, when it is not monotonous, and when the altitudes of the clouds vary a good deal—some sweeping quite low and only just topping the hills, others sailing more slowly far above, and with tracts of clouds between these. The variety of colour, the great diversity of speed, give a great charm to such an aerial effect: it impresses you more with the idea of supernatural *life* than when a surface of cloud is drawn at one uniform speed across the sky. Coming home, the heavens cleared brightly towards the setting sun, while all the rest was denser and more leaden by the contrast. Orange flakes and lines were shot across a clear sea-green sky, passing into blue, but

made green where the yellow mingled with the blue, without any red to keep the two from blending. But it was the wildness of the whole, and the recklessness with which the whole air, seemed animated, that gave the day its peculiar character, and power of exciting interest. I sat and read, and watched effect after effect, until the air and I seemed friends.

The miserable Mannings were executed this morning; they have been hawking the account of their last hours about Brighton, but I have not yet seen it. There is something disgusting in the thought of a large class of human beings getting their livelihood out of a death so horrible.

I have not maturely considered capital punishment. The questions are, Does it deter from crime by example? Does it give a deeper dye to sin in public estimation? or does it harden by the spectacle, and enlist public sympathy on the side of the criminal, instead of on the side of the law? Or rather, there is a previous question to be settled: is the object of punishment threefold only—to serve as an example to others, to ameliorate the offender, and in some cases to defend society by his entire removal? Or is there a fourth element, the expression of righteous vengeance? for I acknowledge I cannot look upon vengeance as merely remedial. The sense of indignation which arises in the human bosom spontaneously against some crimes must, in a degree, be a reflection of that which resides in the mind of Deity. If so, there is in Him that which the Scripture calls wrath, and we are not entitled, I think, to assume that all penalty is intended to effect, or can effect, the reformation of the offender. Probably some penalties are final, expressing infinite justice, and then the higher award of human law must resemble that. It is the indignation of society or mankind, purified of all personal vindictiveness, expressed in a final punishment. For doubtless man—that is, society, as distinguished from individual man—speaks in a degree with the authority of

God. 'He hath committed all judgment unto Him, because He is the Son of Man.' All hangs on that. Is final penalty the dignified expression of *vengeance*, putting aside the question of remedy or of social safety, and does not the element of vengeance enter into all punishment? If not, why does the feeling exist, not as a sinful, but as an essential part of human nature: in *His* words, too, and acts?

I do not know any other ground on which I could defend capital punishment; for the scriptural authority, 'whoso sheddeth man's blood,' etc., is quite inconclusive, being a Jewish rule, and it would be hard to show that it belongs to the race as well as to the nation. Nor do I think there is much weight in the horror which the idea excites of 'hurrying the sinner before his Judge,' and taking from him what you cannot restore. Perhaps there is something mawkish in this. The law of society may be just as truly the voice of God, declaring the termination of the criminal's existence, as a fever, or an earthquake, or, as a better parallel, his own suicide would be; and if so, I would no more shrink from pronouncing sentence than I would from defending my own life by the destruction of another's.

On the other hand, the great difficulty is, that a murder committed suddenly, with half an hour's preparation, must be visited with the same penalty as a crime such as that of Rush or the Mannings.

And again, if the feeling of society be so strongly averse to shedding blood that, as now, there is a morbid interest for the criminal, and ladies sentimentalise, and send bouquets, and use compassionating opera-glasses, while philanthropists rouse public indignation against the law, then it is plain that, whether or not the public conscience has become diseased, it is better to award a milder punishment to criminals, and so continue the public indignation felt against them, than to make crime interesting, and its details the pungent element in such books as 'Jack Sheppard.'

Whatever becomes of the abstract question of the rightfulness of capital punishment, I feel persuaded that society in England is fast approaching to a state in which it will be perilous to the morals of the community to retain the practice much longer. Symptoms of disgust and sympathy are beginning to be manifested so generally, that it is only in atrocious cases, where a feeling of revenge for a horrible cruelty satisfies itself with the criminal's death, that deep murmurs of dissatisfaction can be suppressed.

Those are my crude thoughts on the subject.

You ask what is the meaning of Keble's line—

Who for the spangles wears the funeral pall? *

He has just said, that earth would not be worth having, if it were all, even though affection's kiss brightens it often; and then compares those kisses to spangles on the pall. Who would be in a coffin for the pleasure of having a velvet pall with spangles over him? What matters it to the dead? It is not a very polite insinuation, however, to 'dear affection.' He means, Who would live this dead life for the sake of a few moments of affectionate happiness, or rather a good many, for he says 'oft'? I reply, I would.

I agree with you about Shelley, as to his exquisite delicacy and his power of expressing the inexpressible. There certainly was no coarseness in his mind; still I do not know whether that very refinement be not sometimes more dangerous than what is coarse. So thought Shakspeare:—

'Tis too much known, that with devotion's
visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

I do not, however, really include Shelley in this; because false, miserably false, as his creed and system were, I do believe

* Hymn, Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

that a soul truly refined, pure, and filled with a large love, dwelt in him. There was, however, a fibre of madness in his composition. That 'Sunset' is very beautiful; but those lines are morbid, and belong to the region of spectral phantasms, not real life, not the life of sunny humanity, peopled by

Creatures not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food.

The charnel-house, and the tombs with 'dead selves,' 'vexed ghosts,' and a kind of madness, are all very well for a being who is half insane, as Shelley certainly was; but positively I will not walk with any one in these tenebrous avenues of cypress and yew. I like sunny rooms and sunny Truth. When I had more of spring and warmth I could afford to be prodigal of happiness; love the 'darksome lawn brushed by the owl's wing;' and meditate for hours over decay. Now I want sunlight and sunshine. I desire to enter into those regions where cheerfulness, and truth, and health of mind and heart reside.

In the seventh verse of Keble, it ought to be 'were,' not 'where.'

LV.

November 16.

You ask if Christ's will was strong, simply because upheld by the Spirit without measure in Him? I should reply, because He was a perfect man. Perfect man is manhood with all its appetites, affections, moral sense, aspirations, intellect, in complete equilibrium. Fallen man is not a watch with something wrong added (sin), but merely a watch without the regulator; the mainspring runs the chain out too fast. He alone had a mind in entire harmony with God's. He alone could say, 'I and my Father are one.' 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' It was that entire harmony with the mind of God which made His will so strong. Self-will is weak sometimes, even in a Napoleon. The will that moves with God must be strong, and ever

right. 'My judgment is just;' Why? 'Because I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.' . . .

You ask me about sins of thought. I suppose some persons have sinned by the argument you mentioned, that having done as wrong as they could by an evil thought, there was no reason why they should debar themselves of the rest. But *if* this were an honest argument, it proceeded upon an entire misconception of the passages which would be alleged. The Saviour told men who were priding themselves upon being immaculate in act, that numbers of them would have done the sin if they had had an opportunity, or if they had dared. To have thought it and wished it, placed them on a level with those over whom they were triumphing. But it is one thing to say that a man who *would* do a crime if he could, having already done it in his heart, is just as guilty as if he had done it; and it is quite another thing to say that a person who has had an opportunity and checked himself—for instance, spared his enemy's life when he was on the point of taking it—is as bad as if he had done it. The difference is very plain: the one would if he could—the other could and would not. The great controversy between Him and Judaism was respecting the value of acts. They held that to have not been 'extortioners, unjust,' &c., entitled them to thank God they were not as other men were. He announced that the act received its quality from the spirit in which it was done. Feeling decided the question. Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts. Many a one who was priding himself there, was just as bad as if he had sinned. What thanks to the rich Pharisee that he had never been an extortioner like the needy publican? In kind they were guilty of the very sins which they condemned. 'He that is without *that* sin, let him first cast a stone.' Is there not many a murderer who has never taken away life, but in his heart again and again killed with a deadly hatred? Now the test whether he is a murderer or not comes

when his foe is in his power, when the danger of detection seems past, where there is nothing but his own will and conscience to guide his act. David had such a chance, and so had Saul. Neither slew the other, but Saul hurled his javelin with a right good will, and David at the very last moment spared Saul and Nabal. Which was the murderer? Which had really slain the other in his heart? And do you fancy David might just as well have taken those two men's lives, having resolved on it? Why, there is the parable of the son who said to his father, 'I go not,' and afterwards went. The resolve of disobedience was made. Do we fancy that it was not in any way reversed or cancelled by the change of purpose? The comment of Christ is, that he (that son) did the will of his father. There is no passage in which it is said that the sin of thought is equal to the sin of act. It is simply said the sin of act may be done in thought, so far as thought goes. Whether it is equivalent to an act, I think entirely depends, as I said before, upon the question whether, opportunity and safety being given, it is carried into action. Where these are not actually given in this world, clearly only God knows whether it would have been carried into act. Of course I do not say that the sin of even resolve is trifling. I only say that there are many steps, and until the act of sin is done there will always remain one step more of turpitude: except in those cases to which He so often alludes, where nothing but circumstances, and not the heart, prevented the commission. But *that* would convict many a prude and many a sanctimonious thing who holds up his immaculate hands in pious astonishment at that which he would gladly do, if he dared. Nay, I do believe that a secret leaning towards the sin, and a secret feeling of provocation and jealousy towards those who have enjoyed what *they* dare not, lies at the bottom of half the censorious zeal for morality which we hear. I am nearly sure it is so with women in their virulence against their own sex; they feel

malice, because they envy them. There is a marvellous touch of inspiration in 'Timon of Athens,' I think—a cutting down into the marrow of truth which is perfectly startling in its knowledge of human nature. I feel I can scarcely venture to quote it. I remember that, even as a boy, it set me thinking.

Dr. Channing's life is full of interest, but of a calm, thoughtful kind. He had no adventures; nor were his inward struggles, as detailed, at least, very striking. He had taken immense pains with himself, but the nobler element of his nature was so strongly predominant, that his life was steady continuous victory, unmarked by any of those partial victories of evil which give fearful interest to the lives of the greater part of those who have fought their way to uncommon excellence. The purest love for man, the most unconquerable trust in human nature, seem to have been the very basis of his being. He was a Unitarian, but that is a very wide term, including a vast variety of persons thinking very differently on essentials. I can only say that I should be very glad if half of those who recognise the hereditary claims of the Son of God to worship, bowed down before His moral dignity with an adoration half as profound, or a love half as enthusiastic, as Dr. Channing's. I wish I, a Trinitarian, loved and adored Him, and the Divine goodness in Him, anything near the way in which that Unitarian felt. A religious lady found the book on my table a few days ago, and was horrorstruck. I told her that if she and I ever got to heaven, we should find Dr. Channing revolving round the central Light in an orbit immeasurably nearer than ours, almost invisible to us, and lost in a blaze of light; which she has, no doubt, duly reported to the Brighton inquisition for heretics. But, by the bye, I began on that very day to write out the conversation. Here it is—all incomplete.

A lady called to-day, and when she came into the drawing-room, she put her hand

on 'Channing's Memoirs.' 'I am sorry to see you read this book, Mr. Robertson.' I replied, 'Dr. Channing was one of the highest of his species. For a minister to refuse to read such a book would be miserable. I am not so sensitively afraid of error as that. I throw myself on the Father of Lights, read all, and trust that He will answer a desire for light. An immoral book I refuse to read, but a book containing merely false doctrine, or what is supposed to be false, I dare not refuse to read; or else I could not, with any consistency, ask a Roman Catholic to read my book of Protestant heresy.' 'But Dr. Channing could not be a good man, because he did not believe in Christ.' 'Pardon me, he did—he loved Christ. I wish I adored Him half as much as Dr. Channing did!' 'But he denied that he adored Him.' 'I cannot help that. If the lowliest reverence, and the most enthusiastic love, constitute adoration, Dr. Channing worshipped Christ. I care not what a man says. His homage was more adoring than that of nine out of ten who call Him God. Besides, do you remember the story of the two sons, one of whom said, "I go, sir," and went not; the other refused to go, and went? What care I, if Dr. Channing adores, *saying* that he does not adore?' She replied, 'I believe he adored himself much more.' I returned, 'that some passages in his Diary expressed the deepest self-abasement.' 'Well, probably he had a high ideal; he was mortified at not attaining that before the world.' 'Do you recollect,' I answered, 'how the Pharisees got over a similar difficulty to yours? There was a holy man before them, and because they could not deny the beauty of His deeds, they found out that they were done from diabolical motives, for Beelzebub's cause. Take care; do you recollect what sin they committed by that, seeing good, and refusing to recognise it as good? It is a perilous thing to set out with the assumption that a doctrine is true, and that all who do not hold that doctrine are bad. Christ reverses that order of pro-

cedure. "Believe me for the works' sake." I would just as soon disbelieve in God as contemplate a character like Dr. Channing's, and hesitate to say whether that was a divine image or not; whether God had accepted him or not; whether those deeds and that life were the product of evil or the fruit of the heavenly Spirit.'

LVI.

November 18.

I am very unfit to write; much tired, dispirited, and lonely. Several reasons may have contributed to this. The day was dark with fog and gloom. I spoke very badly indeed, though fluently, and this has added a depressing sensation of impotency to sadness. I know that it is partly physical; that I am not myself, nor master of my fancies, and, therefore, I will not let my pen pour out feelings of which I might be ashamed, and which certainly I should disown to-morrow. I am persuaded there are few things morally so bad as excitement of the nerves in any way; nothing—to borrow a military word, and use it in a military sense—nothing *demoralises* so much as excitement. It destroys the tone of the heart; leaves an exhaustion which craves stimulus, and utterly unfits for duty. High-wrought feeling must end in wickedness; a life of excitement is inseparable from a life of vice. The opera, the stage, the ball-room, French literature, and irregular life, what *must* they terminate in? And I should almost add, the pulpit, where the nervous system is more than ordinarily susceptible. I can only defend it on that which I believe to be the great law of our being, sacrifice—sacrifice for others. You can have little idea of the gloomy thoughts with which I have to struggle on many Sunday evenings.

It is Keble's beautiful hymn to-night, on the loneliness of the soul.* I have read it, and tried to think of what ideas would be suggested in association with the separate verses. Is it quite true that no human eye

* Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

could be permitted safely to read all, and scan the inmost workings of the heart? Would the recoil be in every case, as he images it, like a mother's arm from a serpent coiled round her loved infant? I suppose it is impossible to read with tenderness and mercy. Personal feelings come in; inability to take in all circumstances before and after: we judge severely that which is uncongenial with our tendencies; nay, even that also which is congenial; for I fancy we dislike our own feelings in another—they seem caricatures. And yet I do not quite agree. I think there are some minds and hearts which might be safely trusted to read all without losing their respect and affection for us. Doubtless these must be of the very highest order. I could only name one or two. I remember an anecdote of Thomas Scott having said to his curate, who was rather agitated on having to preach before him, 'Well, sir, why should you be afraid before me, when you are not afraid before God?' But how very easy it was to answer! He had only to say, God is not jealous, nor envious, nor censorious; besides, God can make allowances. . . .

I will do all I can to answer fully your deeply-important questions. I can answer them, for I had to find the answer for myself through much mental trial: whether it will satisfy you, I do not know. But the irrationality of the popular Brahminical system shocked me, for it is Brahminical. I believe in the Atonement now, in a nobler sense than I did before, and also in His sufferings for the sins of men; but not chastisement, or hell, as they horribly call it—nor His Father's wrath.

First, respecting His 'sympathy,' which you seem to think represented as little in my sermon: and you speak of the trifling pain of fasting. Recollect, however, that the whole majesty of the temptation is destroyed if you understand it literally.

What was the temptation? To use Divine power to procure comfort; to choose abundance instead of stones; a life of ease

instead of the hard rock on which the highest must repose ever in this world. How many houses would have been open to Him like that of Bethany, had He chosen! Instead of executing His mission, might He not have turned aside to live in abundance? You must remember His soul was preparing for its work; He was forecasting the trials of His life; His spirit was silently acquiescing in and recognising His destiny, and, one by one, dismissing the alternatives which suggested themselves—a life of ease instead of hardness; rashness and distrustful impetuosity instead of the slow, patient toil of years, and after that of centuries; homage to the ‘splendid majesty of Wrong’; expediency, in some form or other; to make the kingdoms of the world His own, instead of uncompromising worship of the good—unless you keep all this in mind, of course it is ridiculous to talk of anything very divine in fasting. I only gave fasting as a convenient illustration of the way in which there might be pain in subduing the affections and appetites, and yet no sin; how He might really suffer being tempted, with no tendencies to evil. But, of course, I recognised, and even expressly mentioned, the suffering of the tempted human soul as the far more important part of His trial. You say you cannot look upon those trials and tests as anything; but have you reflected that that temptation was but an image of temptations which in a thousand forms beset Him through life? Have you thought what it was for a real man to excogitate a course of action which was new in the world’s history, and steadily keep to it in spite of treachery and desertion, the apparent worthlessness of human nature, the ripe rottenness at the core of the nation whose blessing He was bent on accomplishing? Have you reflected how He might have purchased life by silence and a very little prudent time-serving; what it is to be alone, misunderstood, and in dreadful sense of forsakenness at last to feel that all was failure; to hope for human nature in its

lowest degradation; to believe that man is kindred with Deity, even in Jerusalem; to see a spark in the worst outcast which might become a bright and blessed flame; to despair of none; to hope for human nature even with His last breath on the cross, and with laughter of His devil-like foes rising to his dying ear?

Is there no sympathy here? Are those light tests? Think you He cannot sympathise with our worst sorrows, who shielded from scorn the broken-hearted who could only smite upon his breast; who stood like a God between their victim and the hell-hounds who were baying for their prey, till they cowered at His feet and slunk away; who could forgive a coward, and select the alien and heretic as a type of the neighbour who is to be loved; who was peculiarly sensitive to the charm of woman’s society and its soothing gentleness; who wept for temporary grief; who was considerate for the tired disciples and the hungry multitude whose chosen home was the house of the publican and sinner; who bore contempt with majestic dignity—is that a trifle?—who felt keenly, as His own touching words witness, the pain of homelessness? Oh, can you say that He could not enter into our worst sorrows, or that His trials were in ‘show’? Comprehend that heart, containing all that was manliest and all that was most womanly. Think what you will, but do not mistake Him, or else you will lose the one great certainty to which, in the midst of the darkest doubt, I never ceased to cling—the entire symmetry and loveliness, and the unequalled nobleness of the humanity of the Son of Man. Ask me any questions you will on this, for if there have been a subject I have pondered over and believed in, it is the mind and heart of Jesus. Do not go to that absurd nonsense of mysterious suffering that cannot be comprehended—something neither of earth nor heaven, neither the affection of the man nor the God—a mystery, and so forth, of which the Bible says nothing. Mysterious enough they were, as the sufferings of the

deepest hearts ever must be, but mysterious only in this sense. Alas! they are intelligible enough to any one who has ever conceived sublime mission with a warm heart, and felt courage and tenderness fail in the idea of executing it; intelligible enough for any one who knows what it is to be wrung to the heart by the sorrows and faults of others. All that is unintelligible is the *degree* of agony. To understand that, we must first be like Him—as noble, and as loving, and as spotless.

As to the sacrifice—penalty and its atonement for sin—I will try to take it for my next Sunday subject.

LVII.

Mr. Crabb Robinson has lent me a 'Life of Swedenborg,' which seems to have impressed him greatly. I have been running it over while at dinner, but can make out nothing, except that Swedenborg was a man of great genius, under hallucinations of the intellect. He was very abstemious, singularly pure in life in every way; his chief beverage was coffee made very sweet, without milk; he abstained during his latter years from animal food, and passed whole nights without sleep. He held a perpetual communion with departed spirits, but I observe they were all those whose lives had impressed his imagination, and, if not men of genius, seem to have been generally kings, dukes, princesses, and persons of such earthly greatness. In some of the quotations there are evidently flashes of very intuitive genius, poured on or into scriptural passages. The intuitions are true, but they have as little to do with the passages as they have with the Koran; and had he been a Mahometan, he might have spiritualised the Koran in the same way. His biographer, who is not an admirer, but a blind idolater of him, takes them, of course, as authentic expositions. Perceiving that in themselves they are marvellously true, he takes for granted that they are the very truths presented and intended by those texts. One grand

truth he seems to have grasped—the fact of Divine Humanity as the only possible object of man's worship. He has besides identified Jesus Christ with this object. I have long felt the truth of the former of these positions, and I am more and more satisfied of the truth of the latter. Only a human God, and none other, must be adored by man. The important thing in the worship is, that it be a Divine, and not a sensual or even a rational humanity. I extract a passage, which also agrees with my creed, though I do not know that I ever borrowed mine except from my own reflection.

'Sex is a permanent fact in human nature. Men are men, and women, women, in the highest heaven as here on earth. The difference of sexes is therefore brighter and more exquisite in proportion as the person is high and the sphere is pure. The distinction not only reaches to the individual, but it is atomically minute besides. Every thought, affection, and sense of a male is male; and of a female, feminine. The smallest drop of intellect or will is inconvertible between the sexes. If man's, it can never become woman's, and *vice versâ*. The sexual distinction is founded upon two radical attributes of God—his divine love and his divine wisdom, whereof the former is feminine and the latter masculine. The union of these in Him is the divine marriage, and the creation proceeds distinctly from them, and images or aspires to a marriage in every part. Therefore, there are marriages in heaven, and heaven itself is a marriage.'

He then oddly reconciles this with the text, 'In heaven they neither marry,' &c.

Then there are the most extraordinary accounts of expiration and inspiration of the breath; the latter connecting the thoughts with the earthy; the former, or the retention of the breath, which is the same thing, connecting with the spiritual world. Swedenborg declares that he lived for hours without inspiring; and a host of

odd stories about divers, Indian yogies, people in a trance, and the whole phenomena of hibernation, are alleged in corroboration, but I shall not take up your time with those.

Mr. C— R— drank tea with me last night. He was full of anecdote, and more than I ever saw him anxious for religious information. Last Sunday's sermon seems to have struck him, and appeared very original. In a discussion in some party, where I was the subject of malevolent remark, accusations of heterodoxy, &c., he said, 'The only thing I can say is, that I never heard him without having some stumbling-block removed; and doctrines that appeared to me absurd in the orthodox system shown to be in harmony with eternal reason and truth.' He told me a curious story in illustration of the way in which scepticism follows upon superstition. When a boy, he obtained permission to witness the celebration of the Communion from the gallery of the dissenting chapel in which his parents worshipped. The bread had been cut into squares, and then piled up again in its own natural form of a loaf. When he saw this fall in pieces regularly diced, at a single touch of the venerable old minister's hand, he trembled, and thought a miracle had been performed; but when he expressed his wonder to another boy, and was told the secret, instantly his feeling was that a trick of deception had been played. Accordingly, at supper, he cut up his own roll, and said to his father, 'Now, see me do the Sacrament as well as Mr. — ;' the roll tumbled into square fragments amid peals of laughter; upon which he was punished, instead of having it quietly explained to him that no deception had been intended; but who does not see that that apparent irreverence was real reverence for truth, and that Luther exposing Tetzels indulgences was not more really doing a religious act than the child who was pouring light upon what he believed to be a sham? They laid the

first seeds of scepticism in a young heart, by demanding irrational and blind instead of rational reverence for mysteries.

LVIII.

As I walked home in my dragoon cloak, I thought that I ought to be at this moment lying in it at rest at Moodkee, where the Third fought so gallantly, and where spots of brighter green than usual are the only record to mark where the flesh of heroes is melting into its kindred dust again; but in this, as in all other things, a man must reap as he has sown. I believe the spirit of exceeding self-devotion, as a mere romantic instinct, is but folly. Your reward is the satisfaction of finding that you have lost all and gained nothing as well as done nothing. Your thanks are reproach and blame, and you begin to find, when it is too late, that wisdom and prudence alone can redeem even self-sacrifice from the worthless class of mere blind instincts. One man's instinct is to save his life, another's to lose it; one's to get rid of self, another's to pamper it; one's to give away, another's to save up. These are only instincts, in themselves neither good nor evil, except as guided by thought and by being an instrument of *that*, ennobled. . . .

I agree with and admire all you say about capital punishment. I doubt its efficacy much. I am not quite sure that the sole, or even chief end of punishment is the reformation of the offender. I think a great deal of *law*. Law rules Deity; and its awful majesty is above individual happiness. That is what Kant calls 'the categorical imperative,' that is a sense of duty which commands categorically or absolutely—not saying 'it is better,' but 'thou shalt.' Why? Because 'thou shalt,' that is all. It is not best to do right—thou must do right; and the conscience that feels that, and in that way, is the nearest to divine humanity. Not that law was made, like the Sabbath, for man; but man was made for it. He is beneath

it, a grain of dust before it: it moves on, and if he will not move before it, it crushes him: that is all, and that is punishment. I fancy that grand notion of law is what we have lost, what we require to get, before we are in a position to discuss the question of punishment at all, or to understand what it is. Your criticism on my expression—'vengeance,' is just; but what I meant was a truth, though I expressed it badly: I have tried to re-state it in what I have now said of law.

To-day I read Keble.* It is singularly beautiful to-day. Do you observe the parallel which pervades it? The rainbow in the morning, spoken of in stanza two, and that of the evening, in stanza six, are taken as the types of life. The proverb is,—

A rainbow in the morning is the shepherd's warning,
But a rainbow at night is the shepherd's delight.

The reason of this is, that a rainbow in the morning, being always opposite the sun, must be in the west: the rain is falling there therefore, and that is the rainy quarter; at night it must be raining in the east, from which quarter not much rain is to be expected.

I fancy Keble's observation is quite correct in reference to character. The kindling eye, &c., betray the child of impulse and vivid emotion, which are so frequently found disconnected from principle; and most truly, I think, he describes such a man's life, 'dawnings gay, bright noons of sun and shower.'

I think the pastor was quite right to sigh over such a child. Philip Van Artevelde has the same idea.

— her dawn

Was bright with sunbeams, whence is drawn
A sure prognostic that the day
Will not unclouded pass away.

Bright sunrise—sunset dark, mixed with clouds, sorrow, and uncertainty. The other

* Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

character is the safest, the surest, and, in the end, the most blessed—when the calm, steady, humble inquiring heart feels the beam of everlasting Truth and mild Love burst upon it in the serenity of life's evening, the rainbow of hope throwing its tinted arch over the feebleness of declining years. There is in this a good deal of true insight into character and destiny. And yet, looking over the children of a family, how nine parents out of ten would reverse that prophecy, and anticipate success and happiness from the radiant one, suffering the other to fall unnoticed into the background. I believe that life always falsifies *this* estimate. The rainbow child is soon quenched in tears and darkness. The great men in nearly all departments of existence have been the dunces of the nursery and the school-room. 'The first shall be last, and the last first.' How the deeper inspiration reverses the prophecy of semblances! How precious in the sight of God those qualities are which we think of almost meanly—plodding habits, meekness of heart, sense of dependence; and how almost of the nature of curses what we call 'gifts' are—beauty, brilliancy, sensitiveness, feeling; things, by the way, which are almost always connected with selfishness in some way or another, and therefore, sown with the seeds of misery and failure. Quite right, Keble, teach us realities, and not semblances—to see things as God sees them, and in the spirit of true poetry, prophetic of results. That is a very graceful little poem, and deeply true.

LIX.

My Advent lectures commence next week. I begin to briefly reply to your letter.

Robespierre's theory of the abolition of the punishment of death, taken in connection with his subsequent atrocities, never startled me. He never could have understood Portia's refusal to put even Shylock to death illegally. The eternal sanctions of Law were unintelligible to him. The

transgression of Law was a trifle in comparison with human life, and, as you might have expected, human life was a trifle in comparison with a theory of his own. I should always anticipate that the rigorous expounder of law would be the one to be able to say most exquisitely in practice: 'The quality of mercy is not strained.' Did that rigour and mercy in Portia's character ever strike you as a union no less beautiful than true? And I should expect that a sentimental tenderness for life which is blind to the majesty of law, would be exactly the temperament that could be cruel when, not law, but itself, was interfered with. It spares to gratify its own feelings: it will not shrink from saying 200,000 aristocrats must die if its feeling demands the sacrifice. A severe view of Right, even if somewhat too severe, would have saved Robespierre from that. Of course, I do not mean that the objection to sanguinary punishment is necessarily sentimental, nor that it betrays obtuseness to the perception of the Absolute Imperative within the conscience. I only mean that very often it is so, and that tenderness to evil may be expected to precede a violent outburst of evil. As I said lately—'tempted, yet without sin,' *therefore* we go boldly to find mercy. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. For all this, however, Robespierre's view may have been right, though wrong in him; a little more sense of law and of wrong might have made him a defender of capital punishment. Perhaps a great deal more might have brought him in a vast circle back to the same point of mercy again. Extremes meet: and I think Lamartine's statement a powerful one: 'Le moyen le plus efficace de déshonorer le meurtrier est d'en montrer par la loi une sainte horreur.'

The administration of the Communion to the murderer has always appeared to me, in every sense, a ghastly mockery. A minister of the gospel of forgiveness goes to the criminal with a message that, at least, appears singularly inconsistent. The chap-

lain, in Mrs. Manning's case, I think, outraged all decency; nor do I see how, in any case, it is justifiable when the man, up to the very last fortnight, by pleading 'not guilty,' has remained impenitent. Better leave the whole in uncertainty for the next world; but the practice, I fancy, retains a lingering trace of the magical views of the sacrament. All this, however, is a digression, for I was alluding to the apparent inconsistency of putting a man to death after bringing to him words of mercy. Queen Elizabeth's 'God may have mercy on you, I never can,' and then a last deadly shake. Would it not have been almost superhuman to forgive, when a woman found that by diabolical malice she had been induced to irrecoverably slay the man who loved her to the last. Only fancy the rush of such an agony! 'it cannot be undone, and there lies the fiend who did it.' I fear I could scarcely have said, 'God may forgive you.' It is in the demand for such superhuman efforts as these that Christianity appears sublime. Looking into my own heart, I think I could forgive the deadliest wrong done to myself. I do not think I could forgive one who had diabolically done a wrong to one I loved, or wilfully made me commit a wrong towards that one which was irreparable. As usual, I ask how would He have felt? the latter case was impossible to Him; as to the former, I only know that His language towards those who crushed the weak, and in cold blood slew the innocent, was not mild. THEY '*knew* what they did.' Did the last prayer include them? Whether the last confession of the dying countess might have touched pity, I do not know; but one could have hardly helped feeling, it is too late this death-bed remorse.

'Le mystère de l'existence, c'est le rapport de nos erreurs avec nos peines.'

Do you not understand that? It is the kind of connection which is the mystery. Crime is less severely treated than error. A weakness of the heart produces more misery, more both to self and others, and is more

severely chastised than a deliberate wickedness. It has often made me ponder. Look at weak Eli, only a little too indulgent. The result—a country's dishonour and defeat, two profligates, a death-bed of a widow and mother on which despair sits, and the death of a wretched old man, for whom it would have been a mercy if his neck had been broken before his heart. Then, again, Pilate, only irresolution—the result, the ruin of the Holiest. My only solution of the mystery is this. The hardening effects of sin, which save from pain, are worse judgments than the sharpest suffering. Anguish is, I am more and more sure, corrective; hardness has in it no Hope. Which would you choose if you were compelled to make a choice?—the torture of a divided limb granulating again, and by the very torture giving indications of life, or the painlessness of mortification; the worst throb from the surgeon's knife, or ossification of the heart? In the spiritual world the pangs of the most exquisite sensitiveness cut to the quick by the sense of fault and aching almost hopelessly, but leaving conscience still alive, and aspiration still uncrushed, or the death of every remnant of what is good, the ossification of the soul, the painless extinction of the moral being, its very self? This is my reply to myself. The whole mystery of pain has been unravelling itself to my heart gradually, and now that I have got a clue, the worse than Cretan labyrinth turns out to be harmonious and beautiful arrangement, so that the paths which are still unexplored, I can now believe are part of the same plan. Pain has long ceased to be an unintelligible mystery to me. Agony and anguish—oh, in these, far more than in sunshine, I can read a meaning and believe in infinite Love. Goodness is better than happiness; and if pain be the minister of goodness, I can see that it is a proof of Love to debar happiness; nor am I moved from this conviction by exceptional cases, by perceiving that sometimes the result seems opposite, or by seeing that, as in the brute creation, it

falls in apparent wantonness, without any result beyond suffering. I am so certain that all is right, that nothing of this kind, mental or physical, disturbs me. I know that the heart, like the wound, must bleed till the wound has cleansed itself by its own blood. Then, and not till then, the blood will dry. The questions of the final removal of moral evil and its apparent inevitable necessity beyond even infinite power to remove, is a far heavier weight and darker shadow on my heart, but I have an answer to that too.

You say you do not think it was so difficult for our Lord, if He knew it was only to last three years. First of all, time is not measured by years; the intense heart throws centuries into an hour. Succession of thoughts, instead of dull repetition of a monotone, might make three years of incalculable length. Then, besides, remember it is a Man, out of the resources of His human mind, pondering over, recognising, and resolving on a plan alone, which was new in the world's history, an untried battle with the worldly principle in its manifold manifestations. Only three years! Yes! but try to resolve on a plan—there are ten thousand possible to you—a plan for the country's good, which will involve, I do not say death, but great hardships in the teeth of all the conventions of society, and with the probability of having it said by your own relations, as it was said of Him, 'He is beside himself.' Keep to it unflinchingly, until you can say in the very hour of failure, triumphantly, 'It is finished!' Only try that in a small way, and then say, three years are nothing.—No, nothing when they are done, for the years go fast; but recollect the minutes move slow.

A propos of the measurement of time, I remember two pretty lines of Moultrie:

I have a son, a third sweet son; his age I
cannot tell,
For they reckon not by years or months
where he is gone to dwell.

LX.

Much of the beauty that is laid to Shakspeare's charge is too far-fetched to have been intended by him. Mrs. Jameson errs in this respect, and so do the Germans. In an article in *Blackwood*, years ago, replete with humour, I recollect these words, 'And she,' as the poet pathetically expresses it, 'did so.' Such critics do with Shakspeare just as Swedenborg with the Bible—inform it with themselves and their own sentiments and philosophy, or, as the wolf did with Baron Munchausen's horse, began at his tail and ate into him until the baron drove the wolf home, harnessed in the skin of the horse. Certainly Shakspeare was a 'million-minded man,' if he was conscious of the innumerable philosophies and psychological truths which his million critics have found in every trifling word and sentence. I am heretic enough to think that Shakspeare was mind and dust, and that he can be very low and gross. Horace ventured to opine that now and then Homer nodded a little; he said it in a very gentlemanly way—for the friend of Mæcenas was a perfect gentleman—but I have no doubt he was reckoned a heretic for saying it. What I admire in Shakspeare, however, is that his loves are all human—no earthliness hiding itself from itself in sentimental transcendentalism—no loves of the angels, which are the least angelic things, I believe, that float in the clouds, though they do look down upon mortal feelings with contempt, just as the dark volumes of smoke which issue from the long chimney of a manufactory might brood very sublimely over the town which they blacken, and fancy themselves far more ethereal than those vapours which steam up from the earth by day and night. Yet these are pure water, and those are destined to condense in black soot. So are the transcendentalisms of affection. Shakspeare is healthy, true to Humanity in this; and for that reason I pardon him even his earthly coarseness. You always know that you are on an earth which has to be

refined, instead of floating in the empyrean with wings of wax. Therein he is immeasurably greater than Shelley. Shelleyism is very sublime, sublimer a good deal than God, for God's world is all wrong, and Shelley is all right—much purer than Christ, for Shelley can criticise Christ's heart and life—nevertheless, Shelleyism is only atmospheric profligacy, to coin a Montgomeryism. I believe this to be one of Shakspeare's most wondrous qualities—the humanity of his nature and heart. There is a spirit of sunny endeavour about him, and an acquiescence in things as they are—not incompatible with a cheerful resolve to make them better, which I trust will be good for your mind. Mine wants it much. I speak bitterly of transcendentalism, for it is the rock on which I split; and I do not believe either in its usefulness or its heavenliness.

For man is not as God,
But then most God-like, being most a man.

A sunny, cheerful view of life—resting on truth and fact, coexisting with practical aspiration ever to make things, men, and self, better than they are—that, I believe, is the true healthful poetry of existence. All other poetry of feeling, however delicate and beautiful, is only sickly; the mawkish feeling, which sees more beauty in unnatural Consumption than in the ruddy glow of exercise.

LXI.

I have got Schlegel, and mean to master all that he has said of Shakspeare. Spare moments of time I occupy in studying 'Romeo and Juliet.' Certainly it is the most exquisite embodiment of the master feeling that was ever made. I shall have much to say about it soon. But one thing strikes me in a view of the whole—how very masterly the representation is of the unrelenting way in which consequences follow acts in this world. A clandestine marriage and a revengeful duel—the results are a double death. And this is not all.

Circumstances mingle with all human acts ; they are partly, as it would seem, necessitated, or, at least, excused by peculiarity of position. There is no act which has not its excuse and its apparent inevitableness. Ordinary writers tag a moral to their tale ; as Miss Edgeworth does—which peeps out in every page : ‘ If he had acted so, then,’ &c., but the moral of life is not forced upon you in this way ; it is complicated, perplexing, and requires study to find out. Nay, you may find fifty morals instead of the moral of life’s tragedy ; and in this way Shakspeare paints. Partly circumstance, partly fault, partly what in itself is beautiful, lead to the catastrophe. Not one simple cause, but many causes, intertwined, made up the shot web of his tragedy, as of life. And yet as unrelentingly as in life, the sorrow comes to blight it all. Situated as they were, a Montague and a Capulet, could they be severely blamed for marrying ? Situated as Romeo was, his friend killed for him, could he refuse Tybalt’s challenge ? And yet these double errors, the results themselves of the faults of others, not wholly blameless, yet not unmixedly culpable, slowly and surely bring on the end.

There are three great principles in life which weave its *warp* and *woof*, apparently incompatible with each other, yet they harmonise, and, in their blending, create this strange life of ours. The first is, our fate is in our own hands, and our blessedness and misery is the exact result of our own acts. The second is, ‘ There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will.’ The third is, ‘ The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ;’ but time and chance happen (eth) to them all. Accident, human will, the shaping will of Deity : these things make up life. Or rather, perhaps, we see a threefold causality from some defect in our spiritual eyesight. Could we see as He sees, all would be referable to one principle which would contain them all ; as the simple, single law of gravitation embraces the complex

phenomena of the universe ; and as, on the other hand, by pressing the eyeballs so as to destroy their united impression, you may see all things double. Shakspeare paints man instead of writing moral tales. Of course, there is a moral in what he writes, as there must be in all that is true ; but it is absurd to ask what was the lesson he meant to inculcate. He meant none, I fancy. He merely meant to say, ‘ There, there are men and women. Under such circumstances, such beings would act so, and such would be the consequences.’ How much more instructive than history, which is merely, except in mere annals, events grouped in the connection in which the historian sees them, not in which they occurred, unless he be a man as gifted as Shakspeare. Hence history is merely, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, Mr. Hume’s or Mr. Gibbon’s theory substantiated by a dry romance, until Mr. Somebody Else comes and writes the romance in his way, the facts being pliable, and equally available for both. Accordingly, Mitford’s ‘ History of Greece ’ is aristocratical principles demonstrated from Grecian history, and Connop Thirlwall’s is democratical principles proved from the same facts, and Alison’s history ‘ is Mr. Wordy’s account of the French revolution in twenty volumes, written to show that Providence was always on the side of the Tories,’ as Coningsby’s friend assured him. I do believe there was great wisdom in Marlborough’s saying, that the only English history he knew, or that was worth knowing, was that written by Shakspeare, for Shakspeare does not give facts as they occurred—no, but he gives ideal facts, since the facts cannot be got at.

You like to hear of my work and its success. Dr. King was expressing surprise at the thoughtfulness and freshness of last Sunday’s sermon, which you have seen, and telling me of the slow and silent results of my teaching in revolutionising long habits of thought, life, &c. I remarked, that what surprised me most was,

that I had been left so long unmolested, in spite of great grumbling, dissatisfaction, and almost personal hatred. He said, 'I can tell you the reason. You preach positively instead of negatively; you state truths which they cannot deny; they can only talk of tendencies, consequences, &c.; they can only say it is dangerous, they dare not say it is false; if you were once to preach defensively or controversially, it would be all over with you, and it would do your heart and mind harm besides; but every one sees that you have a message and a truth to establish; you set up your truth, and they are dismayed to find, if *that* be true, their view is knocked down, but you did not knock it down.' These were not his words, but the substance of what he said, and I think, on the whole, that it is not untrue. He told me that more than one clergyman had said to him, 'I think exactly what Mr. R—— said, but I should not dare to say it publicly.' A Scotch gentleman remarked to another person, 'Why, Irving was turned out of the Church of Scotland for saying one-tenth part of what Mr. R—— said on Sunday of the human nature of Christ. What a happy thing it is that the Church of England is too divided to unite in exterminating him.'* Meanwhile I go on, resolving to be at least true. I feel no certain tenure of anything or any one. I am prepared, at a moment's notice, to find the whole break up with a crash, as fine summer weather ends in a storm, the forces for which had been slowly collecting in the sunshine for weeks—nay, were the sunshine itself. I think I partly know what He felt in knowing that the crowds He addressed contained the Pharisees lying in wait, and yet went on. This is my feeling. I command crowds—I have not hearts.

LXII.

MY DEAR —,—My prediction was

* The Scotch gentleman made a mistake. Mr. Robertson's view of the human nature of Christ differs essentially from the view of Irving.

right; yesterday morning rose with all the frost gone, and to-day it is raining fast, and the sky is dense with clouds.

I have been writing lately on the subject of Keble's lines.† I have little doubt that the Church of Rome has paid far more attention than we have to that which forms the subject of this hymn—the treatment of penitence. She has more power to soothe, because she dwells chiefly on that which is the most glorious element in the nature of God—Love. Whereas Protestantism fixes attention more on that which is the strongest principle in the bosom of man—Faith. Accordingly, the Church of Rome treats the penitent by moving representations which touch the heart. Protestantism would do so by an appeal to the intellect, assuring you that if you will only believe, the whole pain has been suffered for you. When you state your misgivings, on perceiving that many of the penal consequences of faults follow transgression, in spite of faith, the reply is—'Yes, in this world; but in the next all the consequences are remitted.' Now this appeal to the intellect leaves the intellect to its own surmises. Why remitted *there*, if not *here*? on what principle, and how proved? If no faith will save a drunken man from *delirium tremens*, where is the proof that it will shield him from other consequences hereafter? You are then referred to the Atonement, and informed in evangelical metaphysics that infinite sin demanded an infinite sacrifice; that the infinite sacrifice having been paid, it will be unjust to punish you again. Once more the intellect replies—'But I *am* punished; and if eternal punishment would be unjust, temporal punishment is also; the whole penalty is not paid, and, in spite of all my admiration of the clever scheme, the heart will have its dire misgivings.' It appears to me that Protestantism throws upon the intellect the work of healing which can only be performed by the heart. It comes with its parchment 'signed, sealed, and

† Hyran for Sunday next before Advent.

delivered,' making over heaven to you by a legal bond, gives its receipt in full, makes a debtor and creditor account, clears up the whole by a most business-like arrangement:—



And when this Shylock-like affair with the scales and weights is concluded, it bids you be sure that the most rigorous justice and savage cruelty can want no more. Whereupon Selfishness shrewdly casts up the account, and says, 'Audited!' 'I am safe.' Nay, it even has a gratitude to Him who has borne the pain instead; a very low kind of affection; the same, differing only in degree, which young Peel felt for Byron when he volunteered to accept half the blows which a young tyrant was administering. The love which is only gratitude for escape from pain is a very poor love. It does not open the heart wide, and, accordingly, basing his hopes only on a *quid pro quo*, a sinner's penitence is half selfish, and has rarely in it any of that glorious *abandon* which, whether wisely directed or not, has so marked the Roman penitence, and which we explain away by saying it is work done to win Heaven by merit. The Protestant penitent, *if* the system succeeds, repents in his arm-chair, and does no noble deed such as boundless love could alone inspire; he reforms, and is very glad that broken-hearted remorse is distrust of God, becomes a prosaic Pharisee, and patronises missionary societies, and is all safe, which is the one great point in his religion.

The sentiment in Keble's last stanza is a true one—the 'scattered fragments love can glean'—and it seems to me the idea I have been labouring for the last two or three Sundays to bring out is the real cause of the difficulty—does the sacrifice of Christ

save me from the consequences of my sin? That question has two meanings; it may imply, does it break the connection between my sin and its natural result—pain, &c.? For instance, will it allow the spend-thrift to remain rich after he has squandered all away—will it give back time lost to the idle man? The reply to that is, No. Look to its operation here. Most assuredly it leaves all the natural results in their unalterable order of sequence.

But the question may mean—Does the sacrifice save me from that which is worse than all pain, the feeling of God's wrath, the sense of banishment from the presence of His beauty and His love? The reply to that is, It does. Realise the spirit of the Cross—the surrender of self-will in love—feel, that is, believe, that God is love; in all the sharpest suffering feel that, and do you then ask if hell can be your portion? Can love endure hell? pain? yes; agony? yes; He did—hell, never. That is, you are redeemed—redeemed by love from remorse, from the disposition to repeat wrong, from the sense of God's displeasure; and the pain you bear is not taken away, but is transmuted. The spirit in which you bear it makes all the difference; it changes it from penal fire into wise, loving, corrective discipline; nay, makes it even the means, by its very present sharpness, of saving from future transgression, and consequently from future pain; and even the pain itself has a tendency, by the slow and healing results of time, to wear out and to become, like the memory of the lost, a sweet and blessed melancholy, passing into even deep joy. The whole question is, from what are we redeemed—from the penal consequences or moral consequences of guilt? I answer from the moral, and through them eventually from the penal; but only the appropriation of the Spirit of the Cross redeems. Love transmutes all. This seems to me the answer to your question of some days back, when you asked about being saved, and yet suffering. I reply, Salvation is goodness,

humbleness, love. He who has them, not will be, but is saved, and all pain only makes him nobler, and gives him a higher heaven. If he says, 'How unfair that I should suffer pain,' it either shows that he is not yet saved, for he is living, not in love and trust, but suspecting God, or else it is equivalent to saying, 'My soul can be made divine without suffering,' which is just about as wise as to say we can have serene summers and heat without lightning.

LXIII.

MY DEAR —,—I am very tired. I could scarcely instruct my class to-day, I have been so languid, that you must not be surprised if this letter exhibits in its replies the traces of a jaded mind that cannot grasp its subject.

First of all, the twice-told tale of Keble's Sunday before Advent, and its being 'use.' Things new and old out of the treasure-house. Is the sunrise use? Suppose a child casts up a sum wrong ten times, and the hands get hot and the brain dizzy, what do you say? 'Calm yourself, my child; take a walk round the garden, then sit still, resolve, wipe it all out, and try again, and I will sit beside you until you do it.' I say to you, try again. As to the dream, let it be a spur and incentive to rouse and invigorate, not to terrify. You are not alone in this world; neither are you to begin again the scrupulously regular life which you have once found fail. Wait! Let all come by degrees. Prescribe no ascetic rules nor self-invented ritual for yourself. That is law, and law only irritates.

Begin from belief and love, and do not coerce belief. Your mind is at sea. Be patient, you cannot drift on the wide, wide sea for ever; drifting on in one direction, you must come into a current of wind at last bearing towards some land. Be sure you are in His hand, not hated but loved. Do not speak bitterly of Him, nor mistake Him. Perhaps I was too severe on Shelley, but it was partly because I can make few allowances for deliberate enmity to God,

though I may for not seeing Him; and partly because I fancied in many things he had done you injury. Let me say one word; do not begin with distasteful religious duties, long prayers, &c. Begin with the distinct moral duties. 'If any one will do His will he shall know of the doctrine.' Be simply a seeker of God and truth: and be sure you never can seek Him in vain. Then make yourself at rest about the end, death, and so on. You must not 'make haste,' to borrow a phrase from a prophet.

Now about the sermon. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' certainly was the cry of a human soul in sharp anguish oppressed with doubts and misgivings. What else could it be? Was He not tried in all points, like as we are? What could it be that suffered but a human soul? Deity is impassible. God was not angry with Him; God could not be angry with self-sacrificing love. He could not, without denying His own nature, annex Hell—that is, an evil conscience and remorse—to perfect goodness. Christ endured the penalty of imputed sin, the sins of others. But imputed sin is not actual sin, though constantly we see it bear the penalty of such—that is, be punished as such. 'The chastisement of our iniquities was upon Him.' It was not merely the 'penalty of His own daring' that He bore. He bore the penalty of our transgressions. He crushed the head of the serpent, Evil, which would otherwise have crushed us, and the fang pierced Him. There is a parallel in the death of Socrates, so far as martyrdom goes; but *His* death was sacrifice, not merely martyrdom; Socrates was simply true to his convictions, and suffered for them. *He* distinctly came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. He alone, of all that are woman-born, conceived the idea of a contest with evil for the world's sake.

Many have conflicted with single forms of evil—that of their own country, that in their own profession—and in the conflict

have been bruised ; but He did battle with evil, not Jewish evil only, but the world's evil ; evil in its manifold forms, grappling with it in its home ; all evil. Socrates sanctified some kinds of the most horrible licentiousness ; he was only a philosophical reformer. *He* came not to reform the Jewish church or Jewish state ; He had no system or plan of that kind, nor did He fall a martyr to any such scheme. It was the overthrow of sin for which He came, with a glance reaching over the ages. The *Son of Man—man's* Redeemer. It was not a sacrifice for a view or a truth, but for the truth. This answers the question, whether there are not some sins not at all of the nature of those which crucified Christ. There are none such. Sin is the genus of which a few particular manifestations are but the species. The will which has shaken itself free from God's will, is the central principle of sin. It matters not whether this shows itself as hypocrisy, or cruelty, or falsehood, or licentiousness : it is part of the mighty principle of that kingdom whose prince had nothing in Christ. Perhaps in actual fact the first two of these had the chief hand in His destruction, but that was, so to speak, an accident and not essential. Had *He* come into contact with Herod, He would have perished as the Baptist did, though the Baptist was only a martyr.

And, again, 'they who crucified Him hated Him, because their deeds were evil.' What particular sins can you with certainty except from those evil deeds, and how could you be sure that any one such sin was not the cause of all the rest in their character? No, I believe that all sins are of the same family. Impure love is only a form of hate and cruelty, and easily passes into them ; and I could not say that those men were not cruel just because they were impure, nor that they were not oppressors, just because they were avaricious, and so on. By which logical connection I believe, even in this way, we could bring in every form of sin guilty of the death of

Jesus Christ. He was on the one side, they on the other. He sought His Father's will, and all men who seek their own will are of the party of His crucifiers.

There was some cavilling at that sermon, much misrepresentation, much bitterness ; but the chief objections I have heard, were in the way of suggested consequences—'if so,' 'then,'—with which I do not meddle. Let them draw the consequences, I state truths. The only tangible point they could fasten on, was the assertion that Christ bore imputed sin, but not the wrath of God, on which point I defy an attack. They have not a single syllable to support what they say. It is as pure an addition to the Bible as ever was made by Romanism.

* * * *

Forgive my descending to gossip like this,* but it is not merely gossip. To me these things are instructive ; I see them in the light of history. I behold the incarnation of the spirit of the ancient Pharisee. I find that evil is not subject to the laws of space and time ; that it belongs to no country, and is of no complexion nor climate. I realise the past when I contemplate a thing like this. I feel that I am living in the presence of the Ages, in eternity, and not time : among truths and principles, of which it is only manifestations that are subject to apparent sequence. These are the things that vitalise the Bible ; and I suppose it is because I know the Bible and have lived in it, that I view them with such severity of condemnation. Here again, however, there is need of caution : I may be a Pharisee for strongly blaming those faults, while I am tender to others more congenial to my nature. I may—

Compound for sins I am inclined to,
By damning those I have no mind to—

for Pharisaism is not confined to matters of Sabbath-keeping and self-complacency in

* He had been relating some stories about intolerant Sabbatarianism.

hereditary descent from Abraham, but belongs to every form of self-congratulation.

The translation of the Latin sentence is, 'His talent was so flexible in all directions, that one would have said, he was destined especially by nature for everything that he took in hand.' There is a beautiful description of this versatility of power in 'Henry V.' Act I. ; the lines—

That, when he speaks,

The air, a chartered libertine, is still, always seemed to me perfect melody, and therefore well agreeing with the eloquence of which they are the description.

As to the character (judged from handwriting), it is of course guesswork—some things right, others wrong—written, too, in the style of an ancient oracle, or Hamlet's account to his friends of his interview with the ghost, or Romeo's first description to Benvolio of his attachment. That is, it would equally do for a great many persons, and is so carefully guarded, that if one side is wrong, the modified explanation must be right. 'The person is not so versatile, as the Latin quotation represents, but is versatile to a certain extent.' That would be true of any one who could do three things with tolerable expertness—sing a song, ride a horse, or carve a turkey. It would also be true of the Duke of Wellington, and everybody except the Admirable Crichton, Michael Angelo, &c., on the one hand, and a man whose physical and intellectual fingers were all thumbs, on the other. Your butler can clean plate, drive a car, exercise horses, wait at table, and be late for the railway train. Between the oracular and the guess-work, all these characters must, more or less, fit. Send him the same hand as a lady's, and you will get back feminine instead of masculine excellences. Thinking it is a man's, he has not introduced one quality that is feminine! These men are all humbugs. You might as well cross a gipsy's palm, as seek astrologers who 'peep and mutter,'

consult the flight of birds, inspect the palpitating interiors of slain animals, judge from handwriting, or tie handkerchiefs before their eyes and say, *Je ne vois pas clair*.

'If God is Love, why do we need a mediator?' I think the best answer is, I do not know. Nor do I know why, God being Love, the intervention of maternal suffering is the indispensable condition of existence, or why suffering is the necessary medium for the procuring of anything that really deserves the name of blessing. Why are knowledge, civilisation, health, purchased only by severe labour for us by others, that is, through mediation? I only know that it is so—an unalterable law, the beauty of which I can dimly see, and always most brightly in those moments when I am least earthly in feeling, and most disposed to reckon nobleness immeasurably above physical or even mental comfort. And seeing that as the law of the universe, I am prepared to believe and acquiesce in it when found in the Atonement, as part of the Divine government—a philosophically as well as theologically demanded necessity. It is no exception to the great system, but in perfect harmony with it.

LXIV.

You have heard people say, 'how impossible it is to acquiesce in the stunting and mutilation of the affections, and all the contradictions of a withering and chilling destiny.' Hard, of course, to submit to the denial of anything on which we have set our hearts; but so might a child say who has to go to school when the day is bright and fine; and so might we say, when tempted to sin, for sin is the doing of that which is, at the time at least, very delightful. But for the stunting and mutilation of the affections I fancy we always have to thank ourselves—our own imprudence, if not guilt. Besides, I do believe that there is a very profound reason for what seems to us the mutilation of the affections. Our affections are deciduous,

and have a prospective end, like the scaffolding by which the house is built. They perish to give way to the building. Love excites the profoundest life of man; and each lower degree of Love prepares the way for one which is higher. The Love of God is the end of all, and I suppose that all must drop off, leaf by leaf, till that fruit is matured. The *withering*, no doubt, is often exquisitely painful; still we find that the heart cannot grow here of itself, and that it retains to the last its 'strong necessity of loving.' In the ordinary appointment this goes on gradually through the successive stages of filial tenderness, fraternal affection, intense love, wedded purity and confidence, friendship, patriotism. In other cases it is done by wrenches, as there are some flowers that blossom with a loud crack, when the old covering, once green and tender, falls off; and the great thing, then, seems to be to go on to the next stage humbly, if one has been missed, instead of sinking to the same level again. N—, for instance, has had one of the seasons blighted. In the midst of all temptations, how purely and calmly he has waited! Ten years of desolation, with a purity of light that has commanded respect and surprise in his corps; and now the rainbow begins to arch again—vividly it never will. But there is a deep calmness, which, mingled though it will be with a melancholy that I suppose will always last, has in it no bitterness. I do respect that way of bearing blight. It is very beautifully put, I remember, in Wordsworth's 'Founding of Bolton Priory':—

'What is good for a bootless bene?'

With these dark words begins my tale.
And their meaning is—whence can comfort
spring

When prayer is of no avail?

'What is good for a bootless bene?'

The falconer to the lady said.
And she made answer, 'Endless sorrow!'
For she knew that her son was dead.

Then comes her endurance, and she
finds the priory:

And the lady prayed in heaviness,
That looked not for relief;
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end;
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend.

Does your friend really think that the certainty of death in six months would not sound to her like a knell? Oh, no; be sure few really wish for death. Bad as life is, it is in the power of a single dream to make us feel that it is not death we long for:—

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant;
More life and fuller, that we want;
No heart in which was healthful breath,
Has ever truly longed for death.

Several of — letters speak with wonder of the failure of his attempt to attain peace and goodness by the devoted life of regularity which he led for many years.

Let me suggest one hint on this which may become a living thought in your mind. No one can 'attain to righteousness, if he seek it, as it were, by the works of the law.' It matters not whether it be a ritual or daily duties. Mere unloving, untrusting regularity fails in producing goodness. Goodness comes not from death, but life. How could suspicions of God, seared feelings, and, to quote from heathenism, 'the rancorous melancholy of one who possesses a noble longing of heart for a better faith, but proudly suppressed it,' how could that soil nourish anything that would bear sweet fruit, or branch into noble deeds?

Yet I can see that this stage, too, is necessary. The bitter, degrading law, deteriorating the heart, goes before the Gospel. We cannot skip the seasons of our education. We cannot hasten the ripeness and sweetness by a single day, nor dispense with one night's nipping frost, nor one week's blighting east wind.

My Advent subject is not yet fixed. I have been diving into reminiscences of the classics, and have been quite startled by things which I passed over formerly with-

out reflection. One thing that has made me reflect much, has been the effect produced by sculpture on the Greeks. Those sublime works, of which fragments are to us like inspiration, were, by the judgment of heathens themselves, productive of a corruption of feelings and morals that is scarcely credible; I thanked God that we have not the treasures of Italy or the Continent; painting, too. And it is very singular to find how all the nobler heathen condemned the stage and the dance, and the poetry which answers to our romance—such men as Plutarch, Cato, Socrates, &c. One very impassioned passage in Plato, I remember, struck me when a boy—where he banishes all such things from his ideal republic; and all the softening strains of music, the Ionian and Lydian styles, retaining only the majestic and masculine Dorian, and one or two others.

By the by, I have just read 'Comus.' What a noble poem that is! Shakspeare, of course, was the greater genius, but Milton was a sublimer man. How seaphically pure and elevated the atmosphere which he breathed! You feel the dignity of goodness in reading ten lines of what came from his soul! . . .

I took my Keble in sorrowful and deep depression, which I had not felt till that minute. I sat meditating on the red embers in the fire, glowing with the history of years, as they so strangely do sometimes, till I lost myself in the wilderness of the past and future. Were I to prophesy, it would not be in Romeo's strain:

My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne.

I should say life is gathering all its fires for the last crisis—and there is nothing more. Nor do I think that exhaustion is the cause of this. . . .

I find that suspicion has attached to the Training School, in consequence of my connection with it. The instant I heard this, I wrote to the secretary to say that I understood such was the case, and that he was either a participator in the distrust, or

else aware of it; that as I belonged to no party, I was quite ready for myself to share the distrust of all, the usual fate of those who stand alone, with not merely a negative but a positive line of thought and views; but that I would not for one moment involve the interests of a public institution in my fate. I therefore asked him to tell me straightforwardly and manfully, whether such a feeling was experienced to his knowledge, that I might put an end to all difficulties at once, by resignation of the office which the bishop had asked me to take, and which I had not sought myself.

Such is my position. It cannot last long. I only care to be true and open, without provoking unnecessary hostility.

A person of influence sent me a message, that if I would only avoid giving such strong opinions as those upon the Sabbath, I might count upon speedy preferment—to which I returned an answer, that the Lord Chancellor might give me the richest preferment in the land, but that he could not give me peace of conscience with it; that the world had nothing to give me which I cared for; that I held the true thing to be ever the safe thing in the long run; and that I could not turn one hair's-breadth out of my own path for Royalty itself. I wish I could say these things less sternly, for I was conscious of saying on Sunday I threw myself on the indulgence of the congregation, being tired, in too haughty a tone. I know that this offends and shuts me out from sympathy in solitariness; yet I cannot alter. It is not in me either to make or to desire to make a party; and my feeble, unsustained efforts are like buffets upon the wind. They watch by hundreds for my halting, and the mass of beings over whom I wield a temporary influence for a brief half-hour, are only chained by fluency—held together as a column of sand is supported by the breath of desert wind. When that wind ceases, it resolves into its atoms again.

LXV.

A long, stupid visit is just over. I do believe that there ought to be more interest in humanity and more power of throwing one's self into the mind of every one, so that no visit should appear dull. An infinite being comes before us with a whole eternity wrapt up in his mind and soul, and we proceed to classify him, put a label upon him, as we should upon a jar, saying, 'This is rice, that is jelly, and this is pomatum,' and then we think we have saved ourselves the necessity of taking off the cover; whereas, in truth, the Tory, Radical, Evangelical, gossip, flirt, or feather-brain are all new beings in the world: such a one never having existed before, each having a soul as distinct in its peculiarities from all other souls as his or her face is from all other faces. This seems to have been one great feature in the way in which Our Lord treated the people who came in contact with Him—He brought out the peculiarities of each, treated each one as a living man, and not as a specimen of a label class, like the stuffed giraffes, cassowaries, humming-birds, and alligators you see in museums. Consequently, at His touch each one gave out his peculiar spark of light, and each one of the characters we have in the Gospels is distinctly himself, and no other: the representative, of course, of a class, but as distinctly marked off from all others of that class as the class itself is from all classes. What deep interest there would be in the most commonplace society if we could associate with human beings in this wondering, inquiring way, exactly as the chemist interrogates every new subject by innumerable tests until he has discovered its properties and affinities.

I dined with — on Wednesday. Mr. A— told me some interesting things about the unaffected simplicity of the Queen Dowager, and the deep religiousness of her character. Certainly, it is a wonderful thing to remember how she steered through one of the most tangled portions of our history, giving no offence, dismissing all

pomp, refusing to hold a court, and, by the simple power of spotless goodness, commanding an enthusiasm which has been rarely given to the most splendid achievements. I do not know that I have ever heard anything so real as her funeral directions since the account of the death of Arnold.

LXVI.

I had a long conversation with Captain H— about the Cape, where he has been recently quartered and engaged with the Kaffirs, whom he represents as nearer to animal existence than anything he ever saw. They seem as lithe as serpents, and as capable of concealing themselves from observation on almost bare ground as a hare. On one occasion they came suddenly on a party of them sitting round a fire at breakfast. A Fingoe gave the alarm, and in a moment the Kaffirs threw themselves on all-fours on the ground, and glided in all directions through the embers and bushes, so swiftly and tortuously that, though he put up his rifle and is a first-rate shot, he could not cover one of them, but was obliged to give it up and bring his rifle down. He knew those officers of whose interception and murder you may remember the account in the papers some time ago. They were out foraging on ground so bare of grass, that though he rode over it an hour or two afterwards, he could see no place where a man could hide himself. On their return 400 or 500 Kaffirs, through the very midst of whom they must have ridden, suddenly started up and cut their off. They rode for their lives, and would have escaped, but that the horse of one, named Chetwynd, fell, upon which the others stopped, dismounted, and stood back to back, and being all armed with double-barrelled guns, sold their lives dearly. Seven Kaffirs were found dead, and others were carried off. Of themselves there were only five. They were soon overwhelmed with assagais; one was found pinned to the ground with an assagai through his

cheek, another, who fought most desperately, was seized, and, as an honour, carried some yards off to a large stone, on which his head was cut off; the skull is now in the possession of a Kaffir chief in the form of a drinking-bowl. They paid, however, dearly for their success, for they were pursued, and 200 of them hemmed in in the bush. The soldiers gave no quarter, and every one was cut to pieces.

On another occasion, while H— and some of his men were at breakfast, a soldier exclaimed, and looking up he saw a Kaffir within twenty yards of him, on a knoll of ground, in the act of hurling his assagai. He stooped under a rock, and the assagai glanced over the point of it, and remained buried in the ground so close to a sergeant that the quivering end struck him. Looking up again he saw the Kaffir stamping with rage at having missed. They rushed after him, as he was at the end of a very narrow bush or belt of wood. H— sent twelve men each side of it to run down as fast as they could, and when he judged that they had outrun the Kaffir, who must be impeded by the trees, ordered them to turn, enter the bush, meet, and drawing a line across it, beat every foot regularly back to the point at which the Kaffir disappeared, as you would draw a cover for a fox. As he stood leaning on his rifle, expecting to hear the cry of discovery, and shots, he saw slowly rising, within three yards of him, the Kaffir's black head and glittering eyes. He remained transfixed and fascinated for several minutes, the Kaffir glaring at him, and he not daring to raise his rifle, knowing that he would be off in a moment. However, his rifle went off by accident, and H—, in a fury, struck at the Kaffir with the butt-end with all his might. The stock broke, and the Kaffir disappeared. Up came the men at the sound of the shot, and searched the place for an hour, in vain. He then went off, leaving three perdu behind at the spot where the savage had been seen. Scarcely had he got a quarter of a mile when three shots were heard—

crack, crack! He ran back, and found that the Kaffir had put up his head again, exactly in the same place, and again got off like the ghost of Hamlet's papa, not one being able to tell what had become of him.

I am going to dine with him again on Thursday, and shall hear more of these anecdotes. I do not know how it is, but they rouse me more than anything of our civilized life. I do not mean this last story, for the poor wretch deserved to get off, and I should not like that kind of work. But the risk and excitement are more real than the being badgered by old maids of both sexes in a place like Brighton.

LXVII.

I have this moment returned from dining with Captain H— and hearing a long account of Kaffirland and incidents of Cape warfare. On the whole they are very horrible, and make war more a matter of shambles than it appears in books. The Kaffirs torture all their prisoners. Our officers were tied up to the trees, and the young Kaffirs practised at them with the assagai, the mothers looking on and clapping their hands at a good shot. Some were flayed alive, others burnt with hot sticks; then there is a bullock-goad, a specimen of which he showed me, a favourite instrument of torture. Horrible as all this is, H— said that they are not so ferocious as our English soldiers. A Kaffir one day pointed to one of the men in a state of intoxication, and then significantly to himself, saying, 'You would make us like that.' They treat our women, too, with delicate respect, which our men never imitate. H— has seen a soldier deliberately place his musket to a woman's breast, that he might kill both herself and the child at her back with the same shot; the English officer, a subaltern, took no notice of this barbarity, and H— was obliged to put him under arrest. Indeed, it seems that officers and men become brutalised there. He mentioned one colonel to whom a Kaffir fired, and singed his face.

The colonel knocked the Kaffir down, strode over him, and coolly took out his knife and jagged it across his throat, instead of stabbing or shooting him. From his account, I confess, I felt strongly on the side of the Kaffirs. They feel that they will become as degraded as Hottentots by being subject to the English. At present they do not drink, and have a much finer sense of honour than the brutal soldier.

For a long time it was a mystery where the Kaffirs got their arms and ammunition. At last, when the war was ended, the secret came out. Every captured musket had the Tower of London stamp upon it—that is, the condemned muskets, which are bought up by merchants, had been shipped off to the Cape and sold to the savages. Nor did they ever want powder; steamers were fitted out by dealers at the Cape, and sent up the shore with ammunition. Can you conceive selfishness and treason of a darker turpitude than this? And the Kaffirs afterwards said, in Shylock's vein, 'These be your Christian merchants!'

He showed me a number of coloured drawings, vividly representing Kaffir life—one a very hideous but strangely fascinating one, in which an English officer, stripped to his shirt, is kneeling in the hands of the torturer, whose exultation and refinements in cruelty are diabolical.

This is man! and these things are going on while we sit by our fireside and complain of *ennui*, or weariness, or religious persecution or scandal, or some other trifling gnat-bite. There was a bundle of assagais, which H—— showed me, of various kinds. It is about six feet long, taper, about as thick as your finger at the thickest part where the iron blade joins it, and feathering off like a reed at the other end. This they use on all occasions to cut their food, shape their pipes, gash their prisoners, and as a javelin, capable of being thrown a hundred yards with wonderful precision.

They are a fine manly race of men, the women beautiful in figure, but all plain or ugly. I should except a few—an officer

told me that one was the most beautiful woman he ever saw.

LXVIII.

Mists and darkness have shut out the sun to-day, but it has been close and warm. I have to-day arranged my time and occupations. From ten to eleven A.M., I mean to teach little Charlie geography; the hours before that I spend in my own studies, which for some time will be chiefly in works bearing upon Genesis, which I mean to study thoroughly, taking such books as Pritchard's 'Physical History of Man,' Wilkinson's 'Egyptians,' &c. At present I am working at Palfrey, an American, and two of the best Germans, who in all matters of research are immeasurably before the English: exhausting a subject. From eleven to one, similar occupation. Then I receive visitors or write letters. At fifteen minutes to three I hurry to the post. Three or four days in the week I have a class at the Training School in ecclesiastical history—Daniel and St. John. Then visits to sick, engagements, walk, &c. Dinner at six, listen to Charlie's prattle till eight, then study again till ten. Arrangements like these, however, are only capable of being kept in an approximating way, for accounts, interruptions, &c., sadly break in upon the best-arranged plan; but only in hard work, with the neck ever close to the collar, can I find any oblivion of thoughts that would be otherwise distracting.

Now let me give you something of the Book of Genesis.

The earlier part consists of extracts from two distinct documents, distinguished by the use of 'God' (Elohim) and 'Lord' (Jehovah).

Now the question is, whence were the materials for this history procured? The answer is a very interesting one; but I believe I shall have to give it in the lecture which you will get. At present it is enough to say, that it is almost certain that it was not from Egypt, but Chaldea, from whence Abraham came. For the Egyptian

and Phœnician cosmogonies do not at all resemble that of Moses; whereas that of the Etruscans, derived from Chaldea, and that of Berosus, a Babylonian priest, singularly resemble it in important points. We might have almost expected this, from the story of the confusion of tongues, the scene of which is Babylon. It appears, therefore, that at the time when the Israelites left Egypt, and long after, the very accounts which were given to them by Moses were the accounts taught and received by another portion of the human race, from whom they had been brought by Abraham and preserved for centuries. It seems that Moses committed to writing those parts which were chiefly calculated to be prefatory to his Law, and to corroborate by an appeal to antiquity the great doctrines he was commissioned to teach—the Unity of God and His moral government of the world, nations, and individuals—the religious parts of the tradition chiefly, and others which historically bore upon the foundation of the Israelitish commonwealth: as, for instance, those records which declared that the Canaan, which he required them to conquer, had been the property of their ancestors, that they had an hereditary right there, and that the present possessors were only usurpers.

This explanation of two documents will account for what must have often struck you—the repetitions which you find in many accounts, as of the Creation and Deluge, the going back every now and then to a point which had been passed, and tracing the same ground over again in different words, until the thread is taken up where it was broken off. You find two distinct accounts of the Creation: one in chap. i. to chap. ii. v. 4; the other from chap. ii. v. 4 to the end, beginning, 'These are the generations,' &c., which is the common and well-known way of commencing a history. In these two histories there are even discrepancies of a trifling nature. For instance, in the first, man is created male and female at once. In the first

animals are created on separate days before man; in the second, chap. ii. v. 19, they are created after man, and brought to him to name. The great points, however, are in both the same—the Unity of God, the non-eternity of things as they are; and indeed the one supplements the other very materially.

LXIX.

February 16.

I will put down a little anecdote for you, on Lady M——'s authority. The present Bishop of Glasgow, whom I know personally, is the son of a man of very large property. When a young man he desired to enter the ministry, but his father objected on the ground that the duties of a clergyman were incompatible with those of a large landed proprietor, he being the eldest son. After a time, however, he made to him this proposal: he gave him permission, subject to the condition of his renouncing his rights of birth in favour of his younger brother. To this, after a consultation with Mr. Wilberforce, he agreed. Subsequently he was appointed to a large living, which partly replaced his pecuniary loss; but last year the bishopric of Glasgow, worth almost nothing, only a few hundreds—I think two or three—was offered him. Without hesitation he made a second sacrifice, and now has one of the most laborious places in the kingdom. Does not this do one's heart good? Tell it to —, and ask her whether I was wrong in saying that human goodness is no dream? The case contains nothing very grand; still, when you come to think of it, it is not an easy thing to exchange the position of a man of wealth for that of a hard-working country clergyman. And though this might be done once by a kind of mistake, in young enthusiasm, before life was known, and the sacrifice appreciated, yet when it was repeated in mature age, with all the realities of past experience to make Quixotism impossible, I feel it was a thing which I should be glad to have the heart to do. It

were far easier, I fancy, to lead a forlorn hope.

I walked to-day alone, along the beach and then round by the well-known corner under the bridge, and so home by the Dyke Road. The day was very bright, but a brisk wind ruffled the sea, and swept the sea-gulls, as if against their will, with twice their usual rapidity, across the waves. Hundreds of these birds were regularly hunting up and down one single large field, without going off from it for at least an hour that I watched them. Not having a gun, I did not go up to them to ascertain what was the cause of their attraction; but I suppose there must have been some sea-substance spread over the ground as manure. A large flock of Norwegian or hooded crows were mingled with them, and the distant hills were exceedingly distinct and clear, in that way which is often a prelude to rain; but I have observed that wind has sometimes the same effect. The shadows of the clouds were very pretty, and the blue of both sky and sea fine; the air bracing and exhilarating.

LXX.

I did not forget my resolve, which I trust I shall not break through as a habit. I try to blend my will with His, to submit mine and merge it in His. Milton's lines—to Cyriack-Skinner—on his own blindness floated across my mind, in which he speaks of not abating one jot of hope, nor arguing against Heaven's will, but steering right onwards. I asked that I, and those dearest to me, might in all things unsophistically see the right, and do it.

I do not know that I have felt so softened and humbled for a long time as at the hour of prayer this morning; more gentleness seemed to distil upon my soul than I have felt for a long time. I could have wept, not happy nor sanguine, but subdued and humanised tears. I do not know exactly why; at least, it would take long to explain the train of thought. But it ran very little

upon myself, or upon my own concerns. Wordsworth, in his account of the revolution by which young disappointment passes into something resigned, and almost cheerful at last, speaks of a kind of sweet melancholy and repose found—

In the soothing thoughts which spring
Out of human suffering.

LXXI.

I have just returned from spending the evening with the M—s. I took a long walk with — to-day. She was brought up under Chalmers, but has a large and catholic mind, fresh, vigorous, overflowing with cheerful desires and efforts to do good, which she carries out on her own estate and everywhere—the secret of all her happiness. I spent the evening alone with them, and felt refreshed; a long conversation about confession, absolution, baptismal regeneration, and the modes of restoring peace and holiness after sin. She spoke of the excessive beauty of M—'s last volume of Sermons; I have not read them.

Your criticism about 'There must be a will before there can be a law' is quite just. Our minds, by their very constitution, must conceive of a law as prior, not in point of time but in point of order of conception, to the Eternal Will, in all moral questions. What I was alluding to, I suppose, was the laws of the physical universe, and I meant prior in point of time. Will decided that those and no others should be the laws which regulate matter. The Divine idea realised is the constitution of this universe, but that of course implies that the idea existed before the realisation of it. All you say, however, is perfectly true, and most accurately thought.

The reply to the feeling about the Temple of God in the Universe, as contrasted with a London building, is a very long one. It would lead into all the questions about the place which belongs to the artificially sym-

bold in contradistinction to the naturally symbolic. I have no doubt that God has so constructed nature as to be an appropriate symbol of the Highest. I believe it has a sacramental power even. But then the harmony of mind with the All is a different thing, and less definite than the sense of harmony with living, imperfect human beings, struggling together towards God, sinful and weak, which is the idea of a Church. The universe exalts; but I do not know that it distinctly elicits the consciousness of guilt—of dependence on human beings, or of our great need of sympathy with humanity. Perhaps it rather repels us from mankind than attracts; and I believe one end of united worship is to bring feelings of this class into distinct consciousness. Of course that does not reply to the objection about flaunting congregations, &c. Only observe, that is an objection against display and vanity, and their unfitness for public worship—not an objection against public worship itself. ‘Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.’ But this does not imply that the stalled ox itself is bad, or even that the herbs are better, only that they are preferable to the other with a certain addition, which neutralises all its value. I do sincerely believe in the Temple of the Universe—its noble architecture, the music of its full choir of everlasting psalmody; and I am persuaded, especially to minds in certain states, nothing is more healing, or so healing. I hold it to be imperative on us to vindicate this great truth, that true worship may be given—ay, and most fitly suggested—there. Still I believe that lowlier but perhaps more really spiritual worship, because more fitted to fallen man, is to be found in a congregation of united adorers, which the other cannot supersede.

LXXII.

February 22.

I will tell you of a want I am beginning

to experience very distinctly. I perceive more than ever the necessity of devotional reading. I mean the works of eminently holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and highmindedness, but communion—a strong sense of personal and ever-living communion—with God besides. I recollect how far more peaceful my mind used to be when I was in the regular habit of reading daily, with scrupulous adherence to a plan, works of this description. A strong shock threw me off the habit—partly the external circumstances of my life, partly the perception of a most important fact, that devotional feelings are very distinct from uprightness and purity of life—that they are often singularly allied to the animal nature, the result of a warm temperament—guides to hell under the form of angels of light, conducting the unconscious victim of feelings that appear divine and seraphic, into a state of heart and life at which the very world stands aghast. Cases of this kind came under my immediate cognisance, disgusted me, made me suspect feelings which I had hitherto cherished as the holiest, and produced a reaction. Nevertheless, the only true use of such a discovery is this, that our basest feelings lie very near to our highest, and that they pass into one another by insensible transitions. It is not true to take the tone so fearfully sounded in Tennyson’s ‘Vision of Sin,’ nor that of Mephistopheles when he sneeringly predicts to Faust the mode of termination for his ‘sublime intuition,’ after the soliloquy in the forest, when Gretchen’s image has elevated his soul. The true lesson is to watch, suspect, and guard aspirations after good, not to drown them as spurious. Wordsworth says—

True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the patient hour of silent thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself.

I feel the need of works of this kind, and I shall begin them again. The Tractarian school have felt and tried to administer to this craving by the publication

of Romish devotional books, but of the most corrupted and erotic character. Our affections must be nurtured in the Highest, or else our whole life flags and droops. At present you are reading 'Channing's Life,' and will persevere, however discouraging his saintly elevation may be; for high thoughts and aims and feelings are caught by contact with the loftiest minds, far more than by any didactic discourses. Pray do not give up 'Channing's Life,' nor read it by starts, but consecutively, and, if possible, regularly every day at a fixed hour. You must bear in mind, however, that his biographer's mind and tone of piety are immeasurably below his. The book is worth comparatively little, but the extracts are exceedingly valuable. I should not, however, say that devotionality was the characteristic of Channing's mind, so much as aspiration and adoration. Largeness of heart is more evident than warmth, and I have heard his writings characterised as cold; but it is a love which is too pure and translucent for the bubbling and turbid effervescence of an affection with which much that is earthly mingles. However, I am not sure that intellectual brightness does not make it too clear for love, which requires a kind of dim haze to live in, where the horizon, and the finite, sharp outlines of things are not discovered, and where imagination by its own swell conceives the infinite of love far better than the eye can exhibit it.

LXXIII.

MY DEAR A—,—I am quite certain that all our expectations of peace in this world are delusive, except so far as we resolutely address ourselves to duty as it unceasingly presents itself in form after form. Otherwise, all soon gets disordered, and our hearts run rapidly down to discord. 'Take my yoke upon you . . . you shall find rest for your souls.' At present manifold perplexities are crowding upon you, and you would fain get away

into a place of solitude, to escape the harassing and distressing calls. But you remember that when He went into the desert apart to rest awhile, the people followed Him, and He had all the perplexity of calculating numbers and provisions, how to provide loaves and fishes for the crowd who were dependent on Him? I do not read that He threw off the responsibility, or called it and considered it beneath and unworthy of His divine energy. How very meekly and patiently He listened to the rule-of-three sum of five loaves and a few fishes—provision enough for one lad, but—for so many! And then the arrangement and marshalling of them all—ranks of fifties, and hundreds, and thousands—Divine expedients to meet temporary deficiencies and past improvidence. Surely something of that spirit is available in somewhat similar emergencies, if the miraculous part of it cannot be repeated. Who can tell how your destiny may be bewildered or brightened according as you meet this emergency truly to yourself and God, or shrink from it in a way that is not courageous? He was tempted to escape duty and long toil by some sudden act of rashness, and to choose plenty and enjoyment instead of a rock-pillow and fidelity to common-place, unromantic needs and occupations; but He felt the reality of a higher life within, nurtured not by solaces but God's presence, and He chose to wait rather than faithlessly distrust.

LXXIV.

This afternoon I received a packet which touched me a good deal: it was a — book, sent from — by a gentleman, who once came to me in great anguish after a sermon in Trinity Chapel, which had struck home and revealed to him the inevitable results of the line of conduct he was pursuing. I did not know he had left the country. It appears that the warning was in vain; all his earthly happiness is and must be wrecked for ever, and he has

quitted England, I should conceive, never to return. The inscription on the title-page, in Latin, is as follows :—

In memory of a warning,
Given, how benignly,
Forgotten, how evilly,
Mourned, how vainly,
Ended by ruin, how entirely !
Given by Infelix.

And that is all I know of the concluding history of one of the saddest tales of an unregulated heart I ever heard or perhaps shall ever know. I shall write, but to what purpose?—words, idle words—the whole realm of Chatterdom is worth nothing—noise and smoke, nothing else. The babble of little birds round the unaltered flight of a hawk, which moves majestically on, do they stop the death or ruin which is before him? I trow not. Eloquence, rhetoric, impressive discourses, &c., &c., &c.—soft gliding swallows, and noisy impudent tomtits—is the true worth of the first orator in the world. I believe I could have become an orator, had I chosen to take the pains. I see what rhetoric does, and what it seems to do, and I thoroughly despise it. I think it makes people worse instead of better; exposes the feelings to tension, like the pulling constantly of a spring back, until the spring loses its elasticity, becomes weak, or breaks; and yet, perhaps, I do it injustice: with an unworldly noble love to give it reality, what might it not do?

* * * *

I have translated a few more of Lessing's paragraphs for you. In order to understand them, I must explain to you, very briefly, Warburton's system, which he partly admits and partly refutes. Warburton published a book, entitled 'The Divine Legation of Moses.' The argument of the whole, well sustained by immense learning but much erroneous reasoning, was this: Warburton saw no doctrine of future life in the Old Testament—this is only true, however, of parts, of which the Pentateuch is certainly one—he concluded

from this that Moses must have had miraculous power to substantiate his claims as a Divine messenger. Mahomet, for example, may have passed for one, and yet be an impostor, because his promises were to be fulfilled hereafter, and could not be tested here. He appealed to superstitious hopes, &c., and had thus a hold upon the present life; but a lawgiver who appealed to no future sanctions and only to present ones, must have been true in his predictions of those present ones—Divine interference, &c., &c.—because they could be tested every day. If he told the Israelites that they passed through the sea dry, and that their shoes had not worn out; if he threatened disobedience with wondrous penalties, the Jews could try his credentials on the spot; but as they recognised these credentials, Warburton held that miraculous power must have been there.

LXXXV.

There is no excellence in me to kindle excellence—there is nothing, absolutely and literally nothing, true and good. Something, perhaps, which a superior being might mournfully and gently look upon and recognise as the germs of a once-possible—perhaps still in the eternities possible—excellence; but after years remaining rudimentary still, more or less dry and withered. A common gardener would require a very powerful microscope indeed to detect the smallest symptom of remaining life, and that, perhaps, the Chief Gardener could only see in a certain capacity of intense hatred for certain forms of wrong, somewhat, however, of the acescent kind, hot and bitter. Hatred for wrong is a kind of life, but there is little of the sanguine love and hope for good left.

I am truly rejoiced to find that you are beginning to feel the beauty and power of such writers as Newman and Channing. I think you will by degrees acknowledge the genius of the latter. It is simple, as all genius is, and not so striking as the splendour of Macaulay's diction, but far

deeper if it be true 'que les grandes pensées viennent du cœur.'

I read a melancholy story to-day. A young English lady, who had been sent from Australia to finish her education in England, was returning to her parents, when the vessel was wrecked, and all the party with whom she was, except herself, was slain. She was taken prisoner by the natives, and has been forced to live with them ever since. She has been seen more than once, vigilantly attended by a black. She is hurried away instantly when the whites are seen. All efforts hitherto to penetrate the forest, and discover her, have been unavailing. The Australian savage is almost lower than the Bosjesman in the scale of humanity. Conceive such a lot for a refined and educated girl! Poor, poor thing! I should like to be in Australia. In my present mood, I would lead the forlorn hope in search of her; I would not recommend any black to come within reach of my rifle. How much better a virgin grave in the Atlantic would have been for her!

* * * *

I have finished Lessing for you, in order that you might have it all complete on Sunday morning. The latter part is merely an old speculation about our pre-existence, as old as Pythagoras, dimly suspected by Plato, hinted at by Tennyson in the 'Two Voices,' and a fancy, I suppose, which has occupied some minutes of all our lives. You will take it as a fancy, nothing more. It can neither be proved nor disproved. Still, even in the apparent absurdities of some minds there is more that is instructive than in the wisdom of others. The whole piece is valuable, chiefly as suggestive; it is crude and imperfect; but it gives large glances into God's world and the Life of man as a whole, and after all does not err in putting in too much details, or in shading too much the grand sketch.

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'Extroitive' is a coinage of Coleridge.* 'Introit' is a musical word, meaning an entrance. Extroitive means that which goes from within abroad. Introitive, applied to a character, would mean one which is exactly the reverse. Thus extroitive, in his mode of application, describes a character which considers the outward consequences of moral evil chiefly, shrinking from them, and penetrates less to the heart and kernel of the matter—shuddering at the deformity of evil in and for itself." From this he draws the conclusion that women are less hypocrites to their own minds than men, because they do not often pretend to themselves to be guided by principle, nor use sophistry to make their acts square with right. It is quite sufficient for such a mind to say, 'It was necessary to do wrong; or else' —. Consequently, women are less veracious than men; dereliction from truth being a slight thing to them in comparison of having to endure the consequences of speaking it. In other words, they feel a Necessity above Right—a fearful thing to feel. I believe this is a correct exposition of what Coleridge means. I am afraid, however, it explains Shakspeare where Coleridge himself puzzles over him in the conclusion of his 'Notes on All's Well that Ends Well,' respecting Helena's conduct.

LXXVI.

March 9.

Lord Langdale has pronounced, at last, the judgment of the Privy Council in *Gorham v. Bishop of Exeter*. The decision, in which the Council, with the exception of Knight Bruce, were unanimous, with the approval of the two Archbishops, and the disapproval of the Bishop of London, is to the effect that Mr. Gorham's views are not contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. The arguments are very temperate and wise, and, I think, unanswerable. If you have the paper, pray

* See Coleridge, 'Lectures on Shakspeare,' &c., p. 114.

look at the quotations from our great divines at the close of the judgment; they are decisive, I think, that Mr. Gorham's opinions are at least honestly tenable in the Church of England. I do not agree with Mr. Gorham any more than I do with the Bishop, and I think, on the whole, the Bishop's views are less likely to undermine Christianity than Mr. Gorham's; for the former at least acknowledges all Christians as God's children, whereas the latter only uses it in the judgment of charity, 'consider a man honest until he is proved a rogue,' which in common life does not make us feel particularly at ease, when we are going through a crowd with money or jewels on us. Nor does it, practically, much satisfy the good people that those around them are Christians, whatever they may say in the judgment of charity, which is especially restricted to the Baptismal font. The common expression among them is, Is he a Christian? Now, with all my heart I love our service for pronouncing, as St. Paul does, 'that all who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,' that is, are Christians. Baptism is the grand special revelation to an individual by name, A, B, or C, of the great truth Christ revealed for the race, that all, Greeks and barbarians, are the children of God. It is the fact which they are to believe, a fact before they believe it, else how could they be asked to believe it? Faith does not create the fact, it only receives it. Baptism is the visible declaration of this, saying, 'Now, remember you are a child of God, from henceforth live as such.' I accept gladly the expression of the Catechism, 'My baptism, wherein I was made a child of God,' &c.—*made*, as the Queen is made Queen at her coronation. She was Queen before; nay, if she had not been Queen, coronation could not make her Queen; it could not make Lady Jane Grey Queen. Baptism could not make me a child of God, unless I were one by reason of my Humanity already. To live as such—to believe it and realise it—is to

become regenerate. The Bishop says that baptism makes a child of God, in the wrong sense that it creates him such, transforms him, which is magic. Still, without disputing how a child became a Christian, the Bishop would agree with me in this, that the child is henceforth to be treated as a temple of the Holy Ghost, in which way St. Paul treated all Christians baptized, even though guilty of flagrant crimes. 'Whether you believe it or no, you are temples of God, as such holy; if any man pollute the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' Does not the sin consist in this—in denying that they were God's children, and living as if they were not such? Whereas Mr. Gorham, who holds that this magical efficacy takes place, but only in some cases, leaves the whole truth of Christianity maimed and disfigured, and brings us back to the spirit of the Jews and the Pharisees. 'I am a child of God in virtue of something not general, like baptism, but special and personal, as feelings, opinions, &c. You are a publican, a Gentile, one of the world in short'—and then what has become of Christianity?

I have been asked in many directions to publish my sermon on Baptism, which seemed to strike nearly everybody in a new light, being not a *via media*, or cautious attempt at steering between two extremes, but a larger truth which absorbs them both, and annihilates their respective errors. I have not yet quite decided. Next Sunday I shall preach again on the same subject, with further elucidations.

LXXVII.

I have been interrupted by two long visits—one a pressing request from the Athenæum to lecture. I refused. The other, a visit from the sister of a quaker, who has applied to me for baptism in consequence of the sermon of last Sunday, and a series of impressions produced in Trinity during some months past.

I find the two sermons on Baptism have made an impression, in some cases pro-

ducing great dislike, but in others producing thought, and appearing to shed light on what had before been dark. So far, I have reason to be grateful. I am nearly determined, however, not to publish, at all events for some time. If I should, it will be in another form, with the whole recast and remoulded.

You must not ever permit yourself the use of that word 'Too late!' Alfieri, when did he begin to study? Shakspeare, when did he leave off deer-stalking and dissipation? He was thirty before he wrote his first poem. Thomas Scott began Hebrew at fifty-six. I do not see what is the use of striking experience if it cannot be applied, and if time can ever be 'too late.' Too late, of course, for any of us to undo the past, but not too late for the past to make the future and the present wiser and better than they would have been with our often-bitter past experience.

A propos of prison-house vegetation, &c., Silvio Pellico composed his 'Memoirs' in prisons, the only materials offered for which were created by a fresh living habit of observation. Do you remember how he contrived to make for himself a life of thought out of the transient visits of the plain uninteresting daughter of his gaoler, by simply cultivating a healthy interest in all that is human and has life? Do you forget the story of Picciola? Do you know where the best book which Spain has given to the world, 'Don Quixote,' was written? By a one-armed man, whose other arm was lopped off, in a dungeon. Oh! be assured that what they call the means of grace are like the means of travelling, very good for getting fast over the ground without exertion, with the assistance of others, but not so good for developing inward muscular energy. A languid lady behind her four greys may look contemptuously on the pedestrian who is struggling along the dusty high-road, and making small progress in comparison—that is, of her horses—but in comparison with her! — gets on very fast with the assistance of — in

knowing all about God and the spiritual life; but in respect of thinking for himself, getting power to stand alone and lead a John-Baptist life in the wilderness, with no means of grace, sermons, gifted ministers to commune with, why I think — had much better go to Juan Fernandez at once, and try to find out how much he has in him of his own; of what stuff he is made, and how, alone, he can front the everlasting Fact, and feel at home in it. A student of medicine, listening to a clinical lecture by the bedside of a patient, learns a great deal about muscles, nerves, and names; but I fancy a feeble attempt in great pain to stagger across the floor of the hospital, teaches more of the practice of health and use of the muscles than all the clinical lectures in the world. Crutches are capital for locomotion, but for strengthening the limbs which they save from the ground, until its bulk becomes flaccid, not very capital, I guess! No; rely upon it, the spiritual life is not knowing, nor hearing, but doing. We only know so far as we can do; we learn to do by doing, and we learn to know by doing: what we do, truly, rightly, in the way of duty, that, and only that we are. Sermons are crutches—I believe often the worst things for spiritual health that ever were invented.

LXXVIII.

Thursday, March 21.

Now, to reply to your remark on the view of baptism which I gave. You ask why the Church of England calls a child, previous to baptism, a child of wrath, if baptism merely recognises the fact of it being a child of God. Baptism does not merely recognise the fact; it reveals it, as a fact unknown, and previous to the knowledge of which the child or man cannot be called regenerate. One who is by right a child of God lives, in fact, a child of wrath, pursuing the path to certain misery by sin. Was not the younger son, in the parable, his father's child really and

truly, whether he lived as such or not ; but was he not also a child of wrath, and what good did his relationship do him until he recognised it and claimed its rights ? In truth, and in fact, he may be said to have then really, in a figurative sense, for the first time, had power to become a son. Yet that power rested upon a fact which was quite independent of his moods and feelings. I would use, with all my heart, both expressions of our formularies :—a child of wrath before baptism made a child of God by baptism : and yet I would earnestly maintain that baptism could only make the child such, in virtue of its being by right, not by recognition, such before.

To all practical purposes the fact is valueless until revealed, just as a child of a sovereign might be living as the son of a pirate, if he had been kidnapped and did not know his parentage ; but all the value of the revelation depends upon the circumstance that it is the revelation of a fact, and not the demand of a sentiment, nor the performance of a miracle, nor the fabrication of a new relation. For instance, the kidnapped pirate—what would be the power of a message declaring him a royal child ? None, except the power of a fact. Adoption by a stranger would be nothing, nor could it make him heir to a throne. Still, you will observe that without that message the fact would be profitless, and he never could have inherited the kingdom. Would you not say, rightly, that he was the son of piracy before, but that the message had made him heir of a kingdom ; and this not as a *façon de parler*—you would be speaking of a reality. Baptism is such a reality ; God's missive to an individual, bearing a name, personally, specially directed as a superscription—I baptize thee, A. B. C.

I believe this will remove all difficulty about the Thirteenth Article. What can be the value of an outlaw's deeds, voluntarily outlawed, refusing his father's laws, spurning his father's home, and living in the original sin—the fountain guilt of deny-

ing by every act his likeness and relationship to God, refusing by his life to be His child, and leading therefore, not a life of truth and fact, but, as St. John says, the life of one who is a liar, and does not the truth, to whom Christ came as one of His own and he received Him not ?

Cornelius' alms, &c., were not looked upon as sins, you say. No ; and the Article does not say that acts done with the inspiration of God's Spirit are sins, but those that are done without. Now, St. Peter expressly declares that Cornelius had the Spirit, and therefore he baptized him. He had, in fact, been living long under its influence, which Peter was astonished to find. What is the Spirit of Christ ?—that whereby we cry Abba, Father ; and surely we could not say the deeds are good which are done in an opposite spirit.

The more I study the Prayer Book the more I am convinced that no other view will explain its words, and the more do I feel their preciousness, of which the Dissenters would rob us. I would not give up one sentence which it contains upon the subject. I would far rather hold the Romanist than the dissenting Evangelical vulgarisms upon the subject. And, indeed, practically, I fancy there would be little difference between my teaching on this point and that of a Tractarian, except in the dark view they necessarily take of the quenching of a baptismal spark by sin, to be rekindled only by tears, &c., &c., &c. I should touch on the ground they do. You are a child of God, claim your privileges—you may lose them else for ever—'a child of God,' and baptism is your assurance of it, not your feelings, which are sanguine to-day and depressed to-morrow, but the one baptism. Only he would say, In baptism you were miraculously manufactured into God's child. I would say, By baptism was revealed to you a truth which by nature you could not have.

I do not agree with you about the Jesuitical character of our Church and its services. I believe the Articles are open

Articles. I do not think it impossible for men holding very different views to be able to sign them, except a rabid Dissenter; even a Calvinist might—of course not a Quaker.

Do study the Services in this spirit, and see whether they do not proclaim most blessed truths, that all are God's children, *de jure* but not *de facto*—that there must be a separate body—a Church differing from the evil world—though the world itself ought to be, and one day will be, 'the kingdom of Our Lord and of His Christ.'

You are quite right in saying that the argument against God waiting to send down His Spirit would hold with equal force against prayer. Of course, if prayer could dictate to God time and place, or if it left no alternative to God to grant or not, which the Romish doctrine presumes, or if God never answered prayer except in the way which it prescribes, or if He never gave, except in answer to prayer, as Rome says in reference to baptism, or if the fact were not that prayer is the voice of the Spirit of God Himself within us, and the reply, therefore, an answer to Himself (Romans viii. 26, 27). God does not wait on a man for his claim of the promise, to the last, because He gives the Spirit before he prays. Is not prayer spiritual life, whether it be in words or in aspirations?

LXXIX.

The weather for the last ten days has been bright and clear, but a piercing north-east wind has made all outdoor work wretched, and appears to pepper the mouth and throat with invisible cayenne and sands of the desert. To-day it has come down in hail and snow. Probably, when it does change, we shall have genial summer all at once with startling contrast.

I have been very hard at work lately, with almost no time for reading or writing. Next week service every day, and two sermons on Good Friday, will abridge my time sadly, besides constant occupation in preparing pupils at the Training School for

Government examination in the ensuing week. To-day I scarcely know where to turn, so much must be done before night. To-morrow morning I mean to take Luke xi. 1, and preach on Unconscious Influence. The Disciples saw their Lord praying, and asked to be taught. So also St. Peter went straight to the sepulchre, and St. John, who had hesitated before at the door, went in after, indirectly and unconsciously influenced by that act. All life is a history of the power of involuntary unconscious influences like these. Our conscious influence is the result of intention, and on the whole does little; but our unconscious influence is the aggregate result of our whole character, manifesting itself in words, looks, acts, that are not meant to effect anything, but which inevitably mould others. Our conscious and intentional influence may fail or may be false, but our involuntary is inevitable, and every moment operative, and must be true. This is the leading thought which I mean to work out; but having a violent cold, my mind is somewhat dull and unfit for work.

It is not an enviable feeling, nor do I think there is much that is enviable in the feeling of any great duty. The luxury of doing good is sentimental trash and self-contradiction. How can any duty be done with ease? Is not all our life—our lower life, at least—a miserable and fruitless attempt to reconcile the indulgence of our low desires for a summer holiday with the infinite and ever-increasing calls of conscience and law? Is not all our higher life a perpetual struggle to reach a horizon of duty, which is unbounded and ever-widening before us, as we fulfil its claims? Two things have brought this powerfully before me—one is the instruction of little Charlie, which has made me rouse myself to feel how much is to be done, and how fearful failure is; the other the meditation upon John x. 17, 18, on which I preach to-morrow—that sublime law of our humanity, as of His sacrifice, converted into blessedness by the truth that it is

rendered to Love, not hard Necessity: 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because,' &c. Oh! shall we not try, cheerfully and sweetly, to take up this law, not as our severe obligation, but as our glorious gain? Let youthful freshness pass, worn looks come; and in me they are coming fast, and will come faster. What matter if, as the outward perish, the inward is renewed day by day? What matter if we see it in those that are dearest to us—if we know that in them, too, the same glorious reproduction is taking place?

What Channing says about intellectual cultivation not injuring moral character among the poor, is true and not true—true, inasmuch as eventually, of course, things must find their level, but not true if he meant to say that the cultivation of the understanding alone improves character. I say it makes a bad character worse by multiplying power.* It is, of course, right to strengthen physical fibre, and he who refused it for fear of giving bad men the upper hand would talk absurdly; but he would be quite right in saying that mere cultivation of strength—albeit a gift of God's, to scorn which would be a reflection upon the wisdom of the Creator—only increases a bad man's power of evil. I say that though in the long run, perhaps after centuries of anarchy and blood, mental cultivation given alone will result in moral good, yet in the meanwhile, and for the present, the harvest will be bitter fruit and ranker villany. 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity buildeth up.' Cultivated understanding has no necessary connection with strengthened, much less purified, Will, in which moral excellence lies, and in which alone Bacon was—

The wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind.

I do not want a greater proof of the truth of this than in what is going on, perhaps at this moment, or, at all events, a

* Channing expressly guards against this objection in his Essay 'On the Elevation of the Working Classes.'

couple of hours ago, in the Institution. Practised disputants and sharpened intellects, these working men have learned to deride God, and trample upon the simplest and first principles of right and wrong. No, no; clear ideas do not advance the soul one step towards the power of doing what is right. It is a great thing when we learn that to understand, and appreciate, and even feel truth is not one atom of power given to the will to be true. The discipline of habits and acting does this, as old wise Aristotle long ago saw: we 'become good by doing good,' not by moral treatises, for goodness is the habit of the will, not perceptions or aspirations.

It seems to me no reflection on the wisdom of the Creator, that intellect cultivated alone will make the poor bad members of society. Any quality cultivated alone must destroy the harmony which the Creator intended, and produce a monster, in which part has the proportions of a giant, part the stunted withered limbs of a dwarf—a hideous unnatural whole. Look at a *Vis-à-Vis* lawyer, with clearest notions of evidence, principles of law, &c. &c., and withal how much sometimes of personal meanness and hatred, of pettifoggery and professional lying!

I am not quite sure what Byron means by the tenth stanza. Probably he did not quite know himself, for I should scarcely suppose he would say, in genuine and contrite humbleness, 'that the thorns which he had reaped were of the tree he planted.' Perhaps it was truer than he meant; for all that vapid, sated, weary feeling, which he describes, was but the inevitable consequence linked to a life of excitement and indulged passion. I fancy that awful description of Tennyson's in 'The Vision of Sin' would truly describe his latter state, or, at all events, that state to which he was on the high-road, had he lived long enough. The hideous pleasantries of 'Don Juan' is a tolerably near approach to it, with a scepticism, more than incipient, of the goodness of others, and of those feelings which had

once seemed half-divine, and strangely ended, like the fabulous mermaid, beautiful above, in debasement and animalism. Yet I sometimes have thought 'Don Juan' was a symptom of amelioration, inasmuch as it was a symptom of reaction. All these feelings, which he once reckoned romantic and sublime, had conducted him—where? Consequently, those hideous sneers at fine feeling bespeak the arrival of a moment in which he could be no longer deceived by feelings, the end of which he distinctly saw. Unhappy enough to come to a state in which one can sneer at feelings, purest, holiest, early feelings, but better than that other eternal delusion!

I send you a paper giving you an account of the Phèdre. Do you not think it is utterly horrible to depict vividly the struggle of an incestuous passion on the stage? Do look over this, and think whether — could possibly be allowed to see such a representation. I meant to have brought it to you, if you had not sent for it; to show you what it is: indeed, the heathen story itself is awful. Only fancy a woman exhibiting herself on the stage to men who are imagining her with all those storms of convulsed and agitated expression, under the influence of a passion such as it should not be supposed a woman could conceive! Even any passion is a dreadful thing to exhibit, terribly resisted, and terribly victorious; but such a one as this! Could any girl or woman understand with sympathy the beauty of the piece, and not be morally for ever the worse for it? Do read it over, and see how atrocious it must be exactly in proportion as it is powerfully and well represented.

LXXX.

September, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR,—Not knowing your designation and address, I must apologise if I have erred in the superscription of my letter to you.

It gives me great pleasure to find that the little address which has fallen into your

hands has awakened any interest or sympathy.

The passage you refer to (page 17), 'To believe in God is simply the most difficult thing in the world,' is, I think, true. By God, I mean God as He is; not a first cause, nor a machinist, *Creator Mundi*, but One whose name is love immanent to us, meaning good and not evil, and having a right to our supreme adoration and reverence. I do not believe that the understanding can discover Him. Paley's argument from design is valuable for those who vaguely feel Him, in order to give a stable solid ground for mere feeling to rest on—valuable also in defence of religion, as showing that it has something to say for itself, and forcing the intellectualist to treat it with courtesy; but for proving God's existence, or demonstrating to one well-informed infidel the falsity of his opinion, I believe it ever has been, and ever must be, powerless. For instance, it does not even touch the arguments of a Pantheist.

There may be a First Cause, intelligent, designing, &c., and his name, if you like, may be God; but *so far* I only believe in Him as I believe in electricity, gravitation, or any other cause, which assuredly has a great deal to do with my destiny. Believe, in the sense of trust, I do not. In morals we only believe so far as we *are*. Rochefoucauld believed in no principle of action beyond selfishness and vanity. How could goodness, generosity, &c., be proved to him? By what evidence? There were the acts before him in history and human life proving design. Rochefoucauld, being vain and selfish, could not believe beyond, or make anything of such proofs. In opposition to the hypothesis of an intelligent Creator, I confess that the hypothesis of the Epicurean, or the Stoic, or the Pantheist, is at least able to make a long fight—far too long to infallibly secure victory in the limits of a life of thought. I do not think that where such men as Laplace, D'Alembert, Hume, Voltaire, have never seen any demonstration, the understanding

can be the real court of appeal. Nay, I am ready to acknowledge, that of the intellectual conception of God as Creator, Cause, Immanent Life, Lord of the World, &c., I am not prepared to assert or deny anything—I know nothing. My understanding feels itself utterly bewildered. I can affirm the contradictory, as well as the assertion, of any of these theories: and if I were compelled in intellectual gladiatorship to surrender them all, I should not feel in the smallest degree dismayed. My God is not the philosopher's god; and in the most vigorous graspings of the intellect, I am often conscious of most losing hold of the Lord of Right and Love.

The evidence of goodness and wisdom in the external world is very questionable, in some moods at least. I found a caterpillar the other day writhing in anguish, and perforated by a dozen maggots, which had come from the eggs of an ichneumon-fly. It penetrates the skin of the living animal, leaves its eggs, and the grubs eat the creature alive by degrees. Is that goodness? Wonderful contrivance, certainly; but I should not accuse the understanding of any one who preferred to believe in the Fate of the Stoics necessitating this, rather than an Omnipotent Will. I know that with the doctrine of the Cross, and the glimpse which it gives us into the grand law of the universe—Sacrifice, conscious and unconscious, for the life of others—this does not startle; but I profess that I have never yet found the argument from the understanding, or a hint of it, which can make it pleasant to believe in a God who has made such a provision as this.

Nor do I think that we get at the feeling through the understanding.* A slave is dependent on his tyrant master. A child depends upon his parent from day to day. But you may exhaust all your logic in proving to either that he must depend, or ought to depend; and at the end of all, you may be very far indeed from making

* He adopts Coleridge's sense of the word, Understanding.

one step towards the production of that 'consciousness of dependence,' which is implied in the words, 'I believe.' You can demonstrate power, but the master's right to enforce, the parent's love in requiring obedience—what arguments prove those when the will rebels? I am not sure that in this brief addition to the sentence of the address I have elucidated my meaning much; if not, I should be very happy to reply to any difficulties you may find in admitting my assertions.

I met an intellectual man in the train, who, after a good deal of conversation about Carlyle, Sir Robert Peel, &c., broke into, 'I heard a very extraordinary man yesterday in Brighton,' &c., &c. To which I replied, 'I think I ought to stop you,' after he had pronounced the name. He then looked me in the face, coloured, and said, 'But where is the voice that was so tremulous? you are not the same man?' Then he began to tell me what he had romanced about me—how happy (he said to his wife) I must be in having chosen that profession, in preference to any other, with such a temperament, daring and sensitive, &c., &c. Alas! how little can human beings read each other. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not;' yet after all, why 'Alas'? Is it not better that it should be so, than that our inmost soul should be legible to all? In this respect it seems to me that Sir Robert Peel was peculiarly happy and wise. Men complained that he kept them in the dark, that they had not the slightest conception of what he was preparing to do or thinking of. Of course if a great mind is to become communicative and intelligible to every small mind, the wisest plans would be abortive, and the maturest counsels dashed by time and tide. If a man see further than his generation, his views must appear horrible to them; the only thing he has to do is to keep them until sufficient numbers are on his side to realise them. Unquestionably this is a proceeding of the highest mind; suppose

he let us into his counsels beforehand? Why, even to Abraham, the intelligence being antedated by a single day, the act is unintelligible, and he does all he can to thwart it. The great difficulty is to do this without duplicity; for in an honourable mind and a true one it is wisdom veiling itself in mystery; but in a crooked one it is mere cunning. Take Christ's life for an example. Who knew what He meant to do? Not even John, much less the world.

I have just returned from Lord Lansdowne's. Some people, whose names I could not catch, dined with us. He told a rather good story of Rogers. Francis, the author of *Junius*, was present. Rogers turned to him, and said, 'Sir Philip, may I ask you one question?' Every one supposed it was one bearing on the authorship. Francis fiercely replied, 'At your peril, sir.' Upon which Rogers quietly turned away, and said in an undertone, 'There spoke Junius Brutus.' He talked to me alone a long time after dinner about Ireland, &c.

LXXXI.

Till this visit to Mr. V—, I never estimated the advantages which the residents of streets opposite the sea have. The exceeding beauty, freshness, and appearance of the sea and the sky in the early mornings, so different from the commonplace look of midday, have struck me very much. Midday is like mid-life, full of commonplace, of toil, and with less of romance; with most people at least. Morning and evening correspond with youth and age, in both of which there is a peculiar poetry. Yet to the eye that is open to see it, the midday and middle life have a wonder and mystery of their own; that is, to those who will look at either horizon, east or west—for the sun is above, unseen then, and only visible at the other periods—which, I take it, is the reason why the heavenly wonder seems to have passed from that period. 'Heaven lies around us in our infancy,' and I sup-

pose the mystery of the grave brings heaven again round our decadence, just as the sun approaches the horizon again at evening. There is something more than fancy in this, for we are so constituted, that the analogy is felt by all of us. Morning, spring, youth—the feelings in them resemble each other, and re-suggest each other; so in autumn, evening, and age. And I fancy, that to get the uncommonplace feeling in the middle period, we must look up and remember that the light which lights us, with such a glare on the world and earth, is just as mysterious and sublime as when we saw all its tender pulses quivering in the morning.

I never, I think, felt the freshness of the world, and the truth that every morning is a new day—an universe unbroken and fresh for effort and discovery—so much as two mornings ago by the seaside. I do not mean that, even for a moment, it gave a conception of a fresh career or burst in life for me, but only that it gave me a conviction of a fact. To-day all is changed, but again I feel the advantage people here have from seeing the innumerable moods in which the sea presents itself. The wind is driving and moaning wildly—the sea all white on the beach—dark and cleft into grand chasms beyond—and almost lost in not a dense but a semi-transparent mist towards the horizon; the carts and flies which go past the dining-room window are seen, as I sit, low down, as if they were on the brink of a precipice; large gulls, with their wild, strange scream heard every now and then, as they go down perpendicularly to the surface of the wave that has brought up their food, or floating about on the mist, colourless like shadows—'And I would that my tongue could utter—The thoughts that arise in me.' For at this moment my heart is in perfect unison with all this scene. I look, and look, until I wish I had no will. Yet the loss of will, with all the other faculties—memory, conscience, fancy—remaining, is surely the very condition of insanity;

for the will alone keeps them from discord. I am not miserable, however. This soothes me. Am I justified, however, in all this utterance of egotistic sentiment? Feeling which ends in itself, and leads to nothing, ought to be stifled. It is not romance. Romance is—

Imagination : honourable aims,
Free commune with the choir that cannot die.

Romance may make a person make shipwreck in his voyage, but it never makes him anchor, more especially in stagnant water ; whereas sensitiveness, and feeling merely intense, do.

LXXXII.

It is curious, when two minds come together, to find how large a department of that which is the very sphere of the activity and life of one, is a region unentered by, and absolutely forbidding to, the other. I cannot conceive how or why —'s life is so lonely, for he enters into and likes all subjects which other men like, understands business and the world, and is perfectly secure from those dreadful rushings of the spirit into unfathomable questions in which I have found no bottom, and shuddered to find none. He is safe, too, from that worst trial which comes from a disposition that has in it—I use the word in a good sense—romance ; for how can such a mind be tortured, or how such a heart disappointed? I perceive,

To each his sufferings : all are men.

* * * *

That predominance of the meditative over the contriving faculties inevitably exposes one to dislike, as it did Hamlet, for now and then a certain tinge of seeming scorn is sure to mingle with its reveries on men and women. It is not, however, any feeling of superiority, but rather pity—not, I believe, insulting, though bitter. 'Quintessence of dust,' applied to humanity, is a mixture of regard and regret for frailness. It is dust, but quintessence of it. So, too,

'Frailty, thy name is woman'—who does not feel that there is at least as much tenderness and mourning in that, as bitterness? Is it not disappointed worship that still hangs fondly lingering before the desecrated shrine? However, as it is somewhat subtle to extract this, it is unwise to utter these amalgams of feeling aloud, for very few will pause to analyse and perceive that two metals, one at least a precious one, are fused together.

'Blessed are they that mourn.'

—asked what that means. Is it not a revelation of the uses of adversity?—and does not the whole teaching of the Cross, in accordance with this, say that sorrow and pain alone wake us up to reality, and that trial is a truer refiner of character than pleasure. Of course, this is not our first impression ; it needs a revelation to tell it, or at all events to interpret our own experience. You have a proof of that in a child's wonder at the expression, for how should a happy careless child divine such a mystery?

I will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind. . . .
In the soothing thoughts which spring
Out of human suffering.

I cannot tell her the meaning of those words of Christ. Life alone can apply the meaning, or explain how true they are ; for, indeed, they are only subjectively true, deriving their truth, not from sorrow and pain in themselves, but from the tempers on which they fall ; so that they are not true always—to some never true. Yet how deep they are, and how such convictions alone can make this life intelligible or tolerable !

That is a blessed faith which feels that there cannot be clouds and gloom for ever—which, ever resting in conviction of what God is, hopes and knows that 'joy cometh in the morning.' That cheerful undespairing temper marks Shakspeare's thought throughout ; in conjunction with that text, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' let it mark yours.

LXXXIII.

I am persuaded there is more in reserved people than we give them credit for; they often conceal a deep and real feeling under an imperturbable exterior. . . .

'The course of true love never did run smooth;' but then that means, I fancy, that it never shows itself to be true—never exhibits its strength—until rough obstacles destroy its smoothness. Many an attachment would have shown all the impetuosity of a dammed-up stream had it been checked, which, under existing circumstances, seems to flow monotonously and uninterestingly enough. The St. Lawrence is tame some miles above Niagara. No doubt the romance of the affair you mention has suffered, but I doubt whether the journey of life will be a bit less happy for that. There is a great difference between travelling one hundred miles in England and the same distance in South Africa, where Cumming spanned and unspanned with considerable difficulty every night and morning; and the romance of the pathless travel was immeasurably the greater, yet the douce gentlemen who travel to London and back every day do not less truly attain the end and object of travelling. Moreover, marriages which had romance in their preparatory circumstances, do they really turn out better than others? I recollect being pained with this feeling when quite a young child, on reading the sequel to the romantic adventures and final union of Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura, in the 'Arabian Nights.' They were all-in-all to each other—their constancy tried for years; and in after-life all went wrong. It struck me, little as I then knew of life, as true to life, and so did some of Crabb's painful but nature-like tales. It is well to feel how much of happiness is gained, or how much of wretchedness is spared, by the absence of those violent feelings which exhaust life, and leave the character dishevelled, the features worn with a graver as deep as that which sharp anguish cuts into the cheeks—

Scathed by fiery passion's brunt.

How many such countenances we see with the marks of strong undisciplined feeling in them! I saw a lady of fifty to-day with cheeks as calm as if she were twenty; yet not apathetic, but wise, full of self-control, affectionate, and benign in manner. You felt that there was in store for her—

An old age, serene and bright,
And calm as is a Lapland night.

I felt that self-rule and delivery from intense emotion and violent *accès* are the necessary qualifications for growth of character and the power of completing anything on this earth. Everything must pay its price, and romance in the feelings or circumstances of courtship often pays a very, very heavy one.

LXXXIV.

They all came in from Lindfield yesterday. I went out to fetch them, and spent some hours in the village of Lindfield itself, where I strongly felt the beauty and power of English country scenery and life to calm if not to purify, the hearts of those whose lives are habitually subjected to such influences. Not that human nature is better there, but life is more natural, and real nature I hold to be the great law of our life, both physical and religious. Physical does, in fact, by derivation, mean natural—physics being the study of nature. I am sure that religion is the recall to real instead of perverted nature, just as the medicinal art is the recall of the body to natural health. There are false systems in both, as well as true, being marked in each case by the artificial and unnatural mode of dealing with the diseased part. You would give Allopathy as an instance of this, and I should give what St. Paul calls 'bodily exercise,'—literally, asceticism. Whereas Christ invariably appeals to unsophisticated nature, says, 'Sin no more,' just as if we should say, 'You have eaten too much and drunk too much, poor

man ; well, eat less and drink less ;' there is no magic besides that which will cure you, no doses of humbug, copious or infinitesimal.

I have begun to read Wordsworth's 'Retrospect'* again, and have persevered, in spite of the dulness, which at first deterred me ; I rejoice extremely that I did. I find it deeply interesting, now that I have got a clue to his object, which is to show how influences are provided for us, if we will once surrender ourselves to them, partly passively, partly actively, instead of inventing artificial discipline ; and that those influences, being God's, are the best—slow, sure, and purifying. It is a history of his own life, and, being a reflection of it, is apparently monotonous, having no shocks or striking incidents ; but his intention is to show how, just from this very monotony, a character of purity and strength was built up. Some passages are excessively beautiful, the diction always pure and clear, like an atmosphere of crystal pellucidity, through which you see all objects without being diverted aside to consider the medium through which they are seen. When you do pause to think of this, you remark, 'What a clear atmosphere ! what pure water ! or, what transparent crystal !' but at first you remark only the object. This, too, I observed of Stanley's 'Life of Arnold.' Every one spoke of Arnold, no one stopped to observe how well Stanley had done it ; Stanley had merged himself and become transparent. Lord Lansdowne was the first whom I ever heard remark upon the biographer, though I had been on the watch long to see if any one would.

For myself, never have I felt a more fixed and settled depression. The thought of fixture here, except under the alternative of great pecuniary sacrifice, has been overwhelming at some moments, and at others, a dead, heavy weight : to be for ever, *en evidence*, especially for one so unfitted as I am for it by tastes and predilections ; yet

* 'The Prelude.'

now that the die is cast, I will not shrink nor cast a look behind, but endeavour to be equal to the hour, and do my duty.

The day is gloomy, oppressive in the house—what it is outside I do not know. Thought has flowed sluggishly, like a thin green stream, in a dead level, without health and without clearness ; zest and interest are wanting, but I put down a part of this to the weather, though it is only a continuation of what has been unaltered indifference to almost all things. I am struggling against it as yet with poor success, but I hold it a duty—a real and paramount duty—and I will not tamely yield. I know how powerless a motive 'our own sake' is to make us work with interest. It is like taking a constitutional with the painful consciousness in every movement that it is for the sake of health, instead of health coming while we are seeking, not health, but an object. Such I find the use of shooting, riding, &c., and such must be the way of getting good from interest in others. You cannot wake up in them an interest by feeling it will do good to yourself ; the interest must have no reflex motive, or else it will do no good. Hence, the uselessness of preaching to do right, to be charitable, &c., &c., because it will make you happy now and hereafter. No doubt it will, but you cannot be charitable because it will. Hence, too, the folly of the system which resolves all our actions into a refined selfishness. So far as you try to be good, in order to be personally happy, you miss happiness—a great and beautiful law of our being. Heavenly happiness is the result of our own energy, and cannot be poured upon the soul, and is almost entirely independent of circumstances, made by us, not for us.

I am ashamed of the hasty way in which I dismissed Wordsworth's 'Prelude.' It is a noble work, one that has made my eyes fill again and again, not by its pathos, but by its lofty tone and translucent purity : a severe work, worthy of patriarchal times, when men went out into the fields to

meditate at eventide, and disciplined their spirits by the pure influences of rock, hill, stream, forest, twilight, and darkness, and that too, as in Isaac's case, on the eve of marriage.

Do not fear with regard to — ; all will be well. Affectionateness, maidenly self-possession, and a quiet spirit are more likely to bud into a beautiful character hereafter than that impetuosity of sentiment which too often makes life the prey of wild and self-destructive passions. Principle is a higher thing than feeling, and will stand life's terrible test far better.

LXXXV.

November 12.

I confess the awful mystery of life, and the perplexity which hangs around the question—what it is, and what it all means. Nevertheless, I am persuaded—as persuaded as of anything I can be in this world—that the meaning is good and not evil—good, I trust, to the individual as well as to the whole. There is a wondrous alchemy in time and the power of God to transmute our faults, errors, sorrows—nay, our sins themselves—into golden blessings; a truth which always appears to me prominent in the history of the Fall. The curses on man and woman, toil, &c., are all, in the process of time, changed into benedictions; the woman's lot itself, of subjugation and pain, becoming the very channel of her best powers of character, the condition of her devotion and her meekness. It is only the tempting devil-snake, in whose curse there is no element of alteration: only apparently a degradation, a slighter doom. no pain—better for him had it been so, for anguish might have slowly worked out change—but to crawl, and creep, and eat the dust of lower Being for ever. A truth for which my whole spirit blesses and adores the Ever Just. 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' — asked the meaning of this; surely it is plain? The tears which destroy the beauty of the out-

ward man, channel his cheeks, cut his features with the sharp graver of anguish, are doing a glorious work on the spirit within, which is becoming fresh with all young and living feelings.

* * * *

I have just returned from the committee relating to the 'Protestant and Anti-Popery,' &c., &c., meeting on Thursday, into which I was hooked. They asked me to speak on that day. I refused; on which the vicar begged for a show of hands, and they were raised, and the thing carried by clerical acclamation. Only conceive that! Of course I have still my option.

LXXXVI.

To-day I had a long and strange interview with a lady who has recently become a member of the congregation. . . . She asked me if I had ever known a case of trial so severe as hers. 'Yes,' I replied: 'numbers; it is the case of all. Suffering is very common, so is disappointment.' 'Are our affections to be all withered?'—'Very often, I believe.' 'Then why were they given me?'—'I am sure I cannot tell you that, but I suppose it would not have been very good for you to have had it all your own way.' 'Then, do you think I am better for this blighting succession of griefs?'—'I do not know, but I know you ought to be.' Wordsworth was lying open on the table, and I pointed to her these lines:—

Then was the truth received into my heart,
That under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,
If from the affliction somewhere do not grow
Honour which could not else have been a
faith,
An elevation and a sanctity;
If new strength be not given nor old restored,
The blame is ours, not nature's.

The deep undertone of this world is sadness: a solemn bass occurring at measured intervals, and heard through all other tones. Ultimately, all the strains of this world's music resolve themselves into that tone; and I believe that, rightly felt, the Cross,

and the Cross alone, interprets the mournful mystery of life—the sorrow of the Highest, the Lord of Life; the result of error and sin, but ultimately remedial, purifying, and exalting.

LXXXVII.

I read, or rather studied, 'Macbeth' through last night, sitting up very late, and never felt half its beauty—beauty as distinct from power—before.

Macready is now giving his farewell appearances, and 'Macbeth' is for to-night. I was strangely tempted to go. Macready nobly tried to purge the stage from all its evils, and Shakspeare is free from the strong objections I have to any acting which merely exhibits dangerous feeling in its might. A friend had taken places and I had resolved not—nevertheless, I felt the temptation strong last night. The murder-scene became so vivid that I actually felt a sensation of creeping awe as I went up the stairs of the silent house, and in very shame was obliged to walk down again through the dark passages, to convince myself that I was not a child haunted with unreal terrors. I felt the tears actually start in reading that noble scene in which Macduff's fidelity to honour and goodness is tested by Malcolm. Macduff's burst of disappointment, on discovering that the prince, to whom all his heart's homage had been given, is, as he supposes, unworthy of it, touched me until my heart

seemed too large. Those fine lines (Act IV. Scene 3)—

Fit to govern! No, not to live;

and then, when Macduff has the man he hates with noble hatred at last 'within sword's reach,' I could have almost shouted. I felt as if to have a firm grip of a sword in a villain's heart were the intensest rapture this earth has to give—the only thing which such as Macduff had worth living for. Places were taken for two nights—'Othello' and 'Macbeth'—but I could not trust myself to either.

I have been trying lately to regulate my outward life somewhat more satisfactorily than usual—my papers, my study, my hours, in order that the inward life may have a faint chance of growing into form. The outward is at least within our power—whether the inward is I do not know; but the one acts upon the other, and it is a duty, at least, to do all that can be done. That all but omniscient Shakspeare says, in reply to Macbeth's

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart? . . .

Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Then Macbeth says:—

Come, put mine armour on, give me my
staff, &c.,

wisely resolving upon present action.

CHAPTER IX.

BRIGHTON, 1851.

Interest of Mr. Robertson in Social Questions—Sermon preached in Mr. Drew's Church to Working Men—He is accused with Mr. Maurice and Professor Kingsley of Socialistic Opinions—His Answer—The 'Record' Newspaper reasserts the Charge after his Death—Letters of Mr. Maurice on the Subject—Letters of Mr. Robertson on Professor Kingsley's Sermon—Letter from Mr. Drew containing Extracts from Mr. Robertson's Letters on the same Subject—Declining Health—Lectures on the Epistles to the Corinthians—Lecture to Working Men at Hurstpierpoint—Close of the year 1851.

Letters from March 14, 1851, to December 5, 1851.

DURING the first six months of this year, 1851, no external occurrences of any importance broke the monotony of the life of Mr. Robertson. There are, however, a number of letters which exhibit some of the phases of thought and feeling through which he passed from January to June.

His interest in social questions continued to increase. His correspondence proves that he studied and endeavoured to refute the views of Louis Blanc. In March he spoke at a meeting held to provide lodging-houses for the poor. On Whit Sunday he preached a sermon on the social and religious aspects of the Great Exhibition.

In June he was asked by Mr. Drew, of St. John's Church, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, to preach one of a series of sermons addressed to working men. He consented, and chose as his subject the story of Nabal and David. The sermon, which is published under the title of 'The Message of the Church to Men of Wealth,' vol. i. 'Sermons,' is an embodiment of his views on the subject of the rights of property and the rights of labour.* It brought him into an undesired notoriety. The public protest of Mr. Drew, after Mr. Kingsley's

* He continued the subject afterwards at Brighton. Vol. ii., Ser. i.

sermon, in which the former repudiated before his congregation the teaching of the latter, naturally attracted the notice of the press; and Mr. Robertson was involved with Mr. Maurice, Mr. Kingsley, and Mr. Drew in a general accusation of socialistic opinions. The cause of the accusation is an amusing instance of the danger of propinquity. It happened at that time that Mr. Maurice and Mr. Kingsley were prominent persons in a movement called Christian Socialism, and the office where their business was transacted chanced to be opposite to St. John's Church. The series of sermons in the church, and the work in the office, were at once connected by some wiseacres of the press, and the report arose that both Mr. Robertson and Mr. Drew were involved in a movement 'with which,' to use Mr. Drew's words, 'they were never at any time, directly or indirectly, connected.' Mr. Robertson was attacked by one of the papers, and accused of preaching democratic principles. He answered that the expression, 'democratic principles,' was too vague to deal with; that the only passage in his sermon which bore upon the subject of democracy was a distinction drawn between the reverence to authority which is declared in Scripture

to be a duty, and the slavish reverence to wealth and rank which is confounded with that duty, and in Scripture nowhere declared to be a duty: that if by democratic principles was meant Socialism—Socialism was not only not advocated, but distinctly opposed in his sermon.

Very soon after his death, the 'Record' newspaper reasserted the charge of socialistic opinions; and a correspondence, of which the following letters from Mr. Maurice form a part, was published in the columns of that paper. These letters appeared on January 12, 1854:—

No. 1.

June 26, 1851.

MY DEAR MR. ROBERTSON,—I fear very much that I have allowed myself to forget the painful position into which I have been the means of bringing you. It has disturbed me much, since I saw you last night, to reflect that we may have weakened your influence, and added to some people's hard thoughts of you, by bringing you into connection with us and our unpopularity. I felt much ashamed of the vanity and injustice of any proposition about printing our sermons together, which only occurred to me at the moment, and which I perceived afterwards would be doing injustice to you. I can only ask you to forgive me for having tempted you to engage in the work, which I certainly never supposed would end as it has done. I think, if you do not object, that I will write a quiet letter to the 'Daily News,' fully admitting their right to say anything they please of Christian Socialists; but begging them, in common justice, not to confound you with us, as you never called yourself by any such name, and as your sermon was neither Socialist nor High Church in any ordinary view of either

epithet, but what they themselves would confess to be a liberal and manly utterance. If you can suggest any better way in which I can act, or if you wish me to abstain from that way, I will do as you like; at all events, will you let me express how much the great pleasure of having seen you and made your acquaintance is mixed with pain at the thought of having made you feel more than ever the divisions and confusion of the Church?

Yours very truly,

F. D. MAURICE.

No. 2.

TO CAPTAIN ROBERTSON.

January 3, 1854.

MY DEAR SIR,—I very much regret that my absence from London has delayed my answer to your note of the 31st December. It must have made me appear neglectful of your wishes. I trust that you will believe that my reverence and affection for the memory of your son would render any suspicion of indifference to his character, or to his relatives, especially painful to me.

The inference which you draw from your son's own statement, and which was confirmed by my letter, is altogether correct. He never, even for a moment, identified himself with the Christian Socialists, or entered into any of their plans. I never had the pleasure of seeing him till the spring of 1851, when I called upon him at Brighton, at the request of Mr. Drew, who was in no way connected with our proceedings. It happened that Mr. Kingsley and I were asked to preach sermons in the same course with him, and that Mr. Kingsley very reluctantly accepted the invitation. But other persons were also asked, who would entirely have disclaimed his views and mine; and the character of the church in which we were successively to appear showed that our only bond was a common feeling that the Church was to labour for all classes, but particularly for

the working-classes. When I found that the circumstances connected with Mr. Kingsley's sermon had led the newspapers to confound the different preachers in Mr. Drew's church together, I proposed, as you have seen, entirely to exculpate Mr. Robertson—the only person, beside Mr. Kingsley and me, who had yet delivered a lecture—from the charge. He very generously declined my offer in a note (the only one, I believe, I ever received from him, certainly the only one which was not of a merely formal character), which I was looking at the other day, and which I shall hope to send you when I return to London. But I am certain he declined only from his characteristic chivalry and unwillingness to shrink from us while we were in disgrace, not because he in the least adopted our name or was disposed to take part in our plans. From the time of our meeting in London, in the summer of 1851, to the time of his death, I never saw him or had any intercourse with him by letters. I sent him one of my books, and preached once in his church (when he was absent and without his knowledge); but I never had the slightest reason to imagine that he sympathised in any opinion of mine, theological, moral, or economical. I always felt that he was doing a great and noble work, amidst much misrepresentation and obloquy, and I was anxious not to give him more to bear than fell naturally and necessarily to his lot. The exceeding delight which it would have given me to learn from him, and to have received his hints and corrections of my views, would have been purchased too dearly if I had led his enemies or his friends to suppose that he was responsible for any words or acts which they might be disposed to condemn in me.

There are two obvious verbal inaccuracies in the copy of my note which you have sent me, but I will not say they are owing to you or me. If you should find that the original does not warrant my

alterations, pray publish it according to your reading. But make any use of that letter, as well as of this, which you may think desirable.

Believe me, my dear sir,
faithfully yours,
F. D. MAURICE.

P.S.—If you wish it, I will write to the 'Record' or any other paper; but the chance of my letter being inserted is, I should think, small (at least in the 'Record').*

The two following letters agree with the expressions in the letter of Mr. Maurice, and prove that Mr. Robertson, while wishing Mr. Maurice and Mr. Kingsley God-speed in their work, and refusing to shrink from their side, neither adopted the views they then held, nor gave his personal sanction to the means they employed:—

July, 1851.

MY LORD,—I feel sure that I shall be excused for taking up a few minutes of your lordship's time in making an observation on the remarks which you have kindly sent me on Kingsley's sermon, which I do, because I think him a man worth putting in a true point of view, though I scarcely know him.

I quite admit the politico-economical errors in the sermon. It is false to attribute solely to the selfishness of the moneyed classes that which arises partly out of the tendency, and encouragement of the tendency, to multiply like rabbits in a warren, and the degrading admission by philanthropists of the impossibility of checking that instinct. It seems to me a great mistake to lead the working-classes to suppose that by any means independent of their own energy, moral im-

* The 'Record' has denied that these letters appeared in its columns; but there they are nevertheless.

provement, and self-restraint, their condition can be permanently altered. And what he says of the accumulation of capital is vague and declamatory. All this I have said to him. Nor does it seem to me (I speak ignorantly) that co-operation can long replace competition without becoming competition itself, between bodies instead of individuals; or that the good of it can be other than that education which it may give to the working-classes, *in transitu*, in the points of foresight, self-control, and providence. But disagreeing with the views which Kingsley *does* hold, I still think it only fair to say that I believe that sermon misrepresents them. In an address published, or soon to be published, I am told he has very strongly stated the opposite and corrective truths, even offending the men by the energy with which he has vindicated the necessity of unequal and even large accumulations of capital.

All I am anxious for, is that sympathy should be felt, or rather candour extended, towards the exaggerations of generous and unselfish men like Kingsley, whose warmth, even when wrong, is a higher thing than the correctness of cold hearts. It is so rare to find a clergyman who can forget the drill and pipeclay of the profession, and speak with a living heart for the suffering classes, not as a policeman established to lecture them into proprieties, but as one of the same flesh and blood vindicating a common humanity. And therefore Mr. Drew's protest, and the Bishop of London's cold condemnation, and almost equally cold retraction, appear to me so sad, as representations of Church-of-Englandism. Besides, is it not in the nature of things almost to be wished, and certainly inevitable, that exaggerated statements on the one side should be balanced by even over-warm declarations of the opposite truth? We have been drilling the poor into loyalty and submission for 300 years. Is it not to be expected that at last, men looking

with their own eyes into the 'glorious law of liberty' should express in rather indignant terms what is a surprising discovery to them—'You have left one great half of the Gospel untaught, its bearing, namely, upon man's civil freedom, and its constant siding with the degraded.' And the accumulation of capital, an abstract right, requires to be checked by a deeper right. *Summum jus summa injuria*. Christianity must come in to balance and modify political economy.

I do not know whether I am justified in sending this long dissertation to your lordship, especially knowing from your public career how entirely you sympathise with all that is generous and, in the true sense of the word, free. I suppose I was incited to it by delight at finding that your lordship had so fairly and candidly judged Kingsley's discourse, and by a desire to modify the impression on some points which his own words have produced.

November 25, 1851.

MY DEAR MR. HUTTON,—I must, in the midst of many small engagements, find one minute to reply to your letter.

In the co-operative plan I have a very limited hope. Eternal laws seem to me against them, and were they to succeed, it appears to me that it would only be competition in another form—of association against association, instead of that of individual against individual. And if this were to be prevented by legislative enactment, I think evils far worse than those of competition would result. The fatal objection to the Louis Blanc scheme is, in my mind, that it makes no provision for an original instinct in our own nature, that of individuality and property. Moreover, that the principle of rivalry is to be our only law, and left to work with pedantic cold-blooded adherence to maxim—let who will be crushed—I can never believe to be the intention of God. All goes on here by the antagonism of op-

posites, and I doubt not we shall find how to reconcile at last the two equally true and Christian positions—

1. Shall I not do what I will with mine own?

2. No man said that aught which he had was his own.

If we were all Christians in fact as well as by right, the difficulty would be at an end; but I do not think that the attempts which begin with the society instead of the individual, will any of them solve the question. The latter, the Christian way, some day or other will. Meanwhile I rejoice at all efforts from the world side; even failures teach us something—

And for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Consequently, I wish God-speed to Mr. Maurice and his plans. I had a long conversation lately with Lord Carlisle about it, and he seemed much of the same opinion.

I sympathise deeply with Mr. Maurice. I do not agree with him entirely, either theologically or economically. But he is quite after my own heart in this, that he loves to find out the ground of truth on which an error rests, and to interpret what it blindly means, instead of damning it. He loves to see the soul of good, as Shakspeare says, in things evil. I desire to see the same; therefore I love him, and so far I am at one with him. I do not pledge myself to one of his opinions, and disagree with many. But he is every inch a man, and a right noble one.

Mr. Drew, who was brought by all these circumstances into close contact with Mr. Robertson, has kindly communicated to me his impressions in the following letter:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I will comply with your request that I would contribute a few pages to your forthcoming 'Life' of my much-

beloved and honoured friend from some of my correspondence with him, and from my recollections of our intercourse.

That many have been sorely impatient on account of the delay of the long-promised 'Life' is not at all surprising, and yet I am sure you have acted wisely in postponing it; for indeed Robertson is only now becoming adequately known, even to those who were most intimate with him: any image of his strong and lofty spirit which might have been presented before this time must have entirely failed in expressing the greatness by which we now know he was distinguished, even amongst the greatest of our generation. If the most inconsiderable men cannot be understood until they have been freed from their earthly environment of trouble and strife and toil, and death hath cast its softening, purifying, light around our memories of them, how truly may it be said that this transfiguration was needful in his case! Apart from ordinary causes of misconception, we remember his patient silence, his dignified reserve. Then, moreover, the seclusion in which much of his work—the mere amount of which has so much astonished us—must have been done, could only allow him to be seen, by even his nearest friends, in fragmentary disclosures. They had, consequently, but the most inadequate conception of his power and depth and self-devotedness: only now is he rising before them in the nobleness of a character which far transcends even the highest estimate they could have formed of him. And when I remember how marvellously—if I may not use a stronger word—much of the material for our present knowledge of him has been preserved, I feel it is indeed the duty of all who can add any contribution to it, to furnish this at once, even though it be at the painful cost of acknowledging that they were separated from him by strong differences of feeling and opinion. You are aware that this was my own case, though I most thank-



Mr. Drew's Estimate of Robertson.

fully remember that these differences never interfered with the cordiality—I may say the affectionateness—of the intercourse between us. Gladly would I forget the circumstances to which I am referring, but in anything like a complete account of him they must be brought forward: nor will I withhold any *characteristic* sentence of his concerning them, though some of those sentences were uttered as strong, sometimes indignant, condemnation of proceedings which I believed I had rightly as well as conscientiously adopted.

It was in connection with the circumstances I am alluding to, and which are detailed with sufficient fulness in another page of this volume, that a large portion of our correspondence was carried forward. He afterwards continued it, though it was at length abruptly terminated, in consequence, I fear, of somewhat vehement expressions on my part of dissent from his views on an entirely distinct subject. The closely-written pages in his firm clear handwriting which now lie before me seem to bring out, even more strikingly than anything of his I have elsewhere seen, some marked features in his character, which are so admirably described in one of those noble pages which picture the ideal minister of 'The Kingdom of Christ,' that I might almost think my friend was in the view of its gifted writer: Spiritual forms, which the majority have need to see reflected in sensible mirrors, rose up before him in their naked substance and majesty; good and evil were to him present, not as means to some result, but as themselves the great ends and results to which all is tending.

. . . He had a certain habit of measuring acts and events, not by their outward magnitude, but according to their spiritual proportions and effects. . . . So he revered poverty and helplessness; he understood that that truth is not the highest which is the most exclusive, but which is the most universal; and the immediate vision of God, and entire subjection of heart and spirit to His loving will, seemed to

him the great gifts intended for man, after which every one, for himself and his fellows, may aspire. Robertson embodied this description; and he did so, I believe, in virtue of that purity and humbleness of spirit to which this vision of God and of His truth, and this entire submission to it, have been promised. His judgment was thus deep, just, and comprehensive, because he, too, had learned to seek his Heavenly Father's will, and not his own. His willingness to do that will gave him his profound insight into his Lord's teaching, and the strong conviction, which has passed into so many other spirits from his own, that it is of God.

Here, in his singular purity and truthfulness, and in his constant devoutness, we have the secret of what we need not scruple to designate his prophetic insight into truth, and habitual consciousness of its invisible and deep harmonies, and, along with this, his prophetic sympathy also with the weak and perplexed and overborne. Beneath all conventional and, indeed, all outward expressions of the mind of God, and through all the means and institutions through which His grace is working for our recovery, he ever looked to the realities and purposes to which they were subservient, and strove with all his concentrated energy, always doing with all his might the task of the present hour, to set forth what he then looked on in closest adaptation to the exigencies of his place and time. This often led him, after the manner of the ancient prophets, to speak as if he were disparaging other truths and ordinances, which, in fact, no one revered more deeply than himself. Nor was he unconscious of his liability to be misunderstood in consequence, and of the odium it might bring on him. Yet he deliberately maintained his purpose, and earnestly claimed for others the same 'liberty of prophesying' which, on this ground, he used himself. Thus he says:—

'We knew Kingsley's heart, his zeal and

earnestness; and if any of his sentences were liable to misconstruction, we ought patiently to have waited till time and our own explanations could have supplied what was wanting. . . . The Son of God said many things *very* liable to be misunderstood; and sober people thought them very dangerous, protested against them, "Lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation." I admit the rashness of Kingsley's verbiage; but rashness is a thing to be loved, not rebuked. My brother, or another officer of his name, by the last 'Gazette,' was rather too forward in the action with the Kaffirs, and fought them with a few men nearly alone. The commanding officer said it was rash, for he lost several men, but praised his gallantry warmly. I wish to God we had a little soldier's spirit in our Church! . . .

'No! the Church of England will endure no chivalry, no *dash*, no effervescing enthusiasm. She cannot turn it to account, as Rome turns that of Loyola and Xaviers. We bear nothing but sober prosaic routine; and the moment any one with heart and nerve fit to be the leader of a forlorn hope appears, we call him a dangerous man, and exasperate him by cold unsympathising reproofs, till he becomes a Dissenter and a demagogue. . . . Well, I suppose God will punish us, if in no other way, by banishing from us all noble spirits, like Newman and Manning, in one direction, and men like Kingsley in another, leaving us to flounder in the mud of commonplace, unable to rise or sink above the dead level. Day by day my hopes are sinking. We dare not say the things we feel. Who can? Who possibly may, when *Records*, *Guardians*, brother ministers, and lay hearers are ready at every turn to call out heterodoxy? It is bondage more than Roman. And if a man sets his face like a flint, and deperately runs amuck with his eyes shut, caring not who is offended, then he injures his own spirit, becomes, like noble Carlyle, ferocious, and loses the stream of

living waters in dry desert sand, fructifying nothing, but only festering into swamp shallows. . . . Imprudence, half-truths, rash cries of sympathetic torture. Yes! But through all these I would hold fast by a man if I were sure he was sound at heart, and meant differently from what he seemed to mean. . . . I hold to heart, to manhood and nobleness, not correct expression. I try to judge words and actions by the man, not the man by his words and actions. . . . What I have said in behalf of Kingsley I have said quite as strongly from my own pulpit in behalf of Tractarians. By standing by a man I mean not adopting his views, if they are not our own, but tolerating them, and that to an almost unlimited extent—unlimited, at least, in comparison with the limits which the most liberal I know propose. And if I were convinced he meant rightly, then by standing by him I should include defending and explaining. . . . I am afraid my illustrations are somewhat too military, but I was rocked and cradled to the roar of artillery, and I began life with a preparation for, and appointment to, the 3rd Dragoons. *Di's aliter visum.'*

You may here see how deliberately he used much of that language which, in some instances, might be condemned as marking vehement onesidedness on his part; how perfectly he was conscious of those complimentary balancing truths which were apparently forgotten by him when he urgently insisted on others which he looked on as neglected. This also is further seen when he writes:—

'Kingsley assumes, perhaps more than I should, that human selfishness lies at the bottom of our social evils. I believe that the contravention of laws which will avenge themselves, as, for instance, improvidence and foolish marriages, have had their share in the production of our present embarrassment; and that it is one thing to cry woe to those who have kept back the hire of

the labourers who have reaped down their fields, and another to denounce it against those whose fault has been partly ignorance, partly supineness. But then (he adds) "this is my opinion, mine only," he having a right to his. Moreover, he may be more right than I think. Our foolish sentiment in promoting marriages, and declaring submission to a brute instinct a Christian duty; our non-education of the people through party squabbles; our suffering a vast population to grow up while Church extension meant only more churches and more salaries; and while bishops in parliament defending the Church meant only bishops rising whenever the stipends of the Church were in danger, and sitting still when corn laws, or any other great measure affecting the numbers and food of the people, came into question. All these things, when I think of them, make me doubt whether Kingsley's theory has not a deep, deep, awful truth at the bottom. Besides, for 3000 years it was the theory and tone of God's best and truest of His prophets, His brave ones; and I shrink from saying, very authoritatively, that his view is wrong, though at present I do think it imperfect.

'It is quite true that Kingsley took no notice of the blessings of constituted order, &c. But they were no very particular blessings to the wretches who were rising by thousands before his tortured imagination. Blessings to you and to me, and to nobles, and well-to-do tradesmen, and to all Belgravia; but Kingsley felt he had something else to do besides lauding our incomparable constitution—viz. to declare the truth that there is an emancipation yet unaccomplished, which will be woe to Belgravia, and to hock-drinking tradesmen, and to us, the ministers of the Church, if we do not accomplish.'

If, for many reasons besides the sorrow of even seeming to have needed such words of expostulation and rebuke, one might be painfully reluctant to copy out these passages, yet surely no one, revering my friend's

character, and desiring to have it fully represented, would have one of them suppressed. I think he would not, for the very reason which might at first seem to require this suppression. For not only are they plainly distinguished from that railing fanaticism of the mere demagogue with which, on a superficial glance, they might be confounded; but they are, in fact, essentially, nay, antithetically opposed to it. This is seen in the consciousness that may be discerned in even the most vehement of my friend's utterances, of all the force belonging to every view of the question in debate that was urged by his correspondent. He could also sympathise with the motives and feelings of those who were sincerely resisting him. 'Nevertheless,' he says, in the same letter from which the above extracts are taken—

'I repeat I do you warmly justice. If I did not, I assure you I should not have taken the trouble to write as warmly and strongly as I have done; I should have let my sad and indignant feelings remain pent-up. I have poured them out to you, because I do think it is worth it, and that there is a much greater chance of union by so doing. I am sure of you, as of myself, that you are not on the side of the Pharisaisms and Respectabilities in the sense in which I spoke of them. Respectabilities, in a now familiar Carlylian sense, is a word implying, at least to me, persons like Balaam, or persons who are respectable, and nothing more; persons who are simply and selfishly conservative—not Conservatives, because I honour many of them, but persons who hate stir and reformation, because these get down to facts, and disturb cobwebs.'

One more extract may be given from his letters on this subject. It is the last which I received from him relating to it. Some of his words here are worth copying, for the sake of showing the intense hatred—and surely it was the hatred of him who said, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that

hate Thee?'—with which he regarded some of the malignant forms which sectarianism assumes amongst us:—

'I have just had sent me the *Record*, in which your letter appears, and thank you heartily for the generous defence of me which it contains. The *Record* has done me the honour to abuse me for some time past, for which I thank them gratefully. God forbid they should ever praise me! One number alone contained four unscrupulous lies about me, on no better evidence than that some one had told them, who had been told by somebody else. They shall have no disclaimer from me. If the *Record* can put a man down, the sooner he is put down the better. The only time I have ever said anything about Socialism in the pulpit has been to preach against it. The Evangelicalism (so called) of the *Record* is an emasculated cur, snarling at all that is better than itself, cowardly, lying, and slanderous. It is not worth while to stop your horse and castigate it; for it will be off yelping, and come back to snarl. An evangelical clergyman admitted some proofs I had given him of the *Record*'s cowardice and dishonesty, but said, "Well, in spite of that I like it, because it upholds the truth, and is a great witness for religion." "So," said I, "is that the creed of evangelicalism? A man may be a liar, a coward, and slanderous, and still uphold the truth!"—'

Vehement! some may say; but surely in such vehemence there was heavenly wisdom! Are not these words of his in profound concord with the divinest that have been addressed to us? Did he not speak thus because, in closest personal communion, he had deeply inbreathed the spirit of Him who, of all, spake sometimes most severely, as well as most lovingly and tolerantly? Was not this intense feeling, that so flowed out from him on all sides, part of the 'reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice,' which could not—should we, in love for him, desire that it might—have been pro-

longed? When I think of the consuming pain this broadly intense sympathy must have cost him, I recall as selfish and inconsiderate the wish that he were still here to help us in the great conflict of our generation. Robertson would have helped us all, by his deep insight and large open-heartedness, on whichever side of the strife we are contending. Of his genius and his energy we are bereaved, but all may endeavour to maintain his sympathy and tolerance; and I shall be glad that I have overcome the reluctance to send you some of the words he addressed to me, if any shall be helped in that endeavour by reading them.

Sincerely yours,
G. S. DREW.

All through this year Mr. Robertson's health continued to decline. In June a strong memorial was presented to him from Drs. Allen and Whitehouse, 'urging me,' he wrote, 'to give up my work for some months, and prognosticating unpleasant consequences if I refuse.' In January he had already written to a friend excusing himself for remissness in sending the usual notes of his sermons.

The lassitude he suffered from prevented his enjoying the Exhibition; the crowd and noise irritated and wearied him. But his work did not suffer, nor his energy decrease. In June he began to lecture in the afternoons of Sundays on the Epistles to the Corinthians. He introduced the course by a masterly account of the state of Corinth and its parties at the time of the Apostle Paul. He continued these lectures till his death, and the last he ever preached was on the last chapter of the second epistle. They have now been published; though from notes so meagre and unfinished that no idea of them, as

delivered, can be formed. All the colour and glow have perished; the thoughts alone remain. They are valuable, however, for their insight into St. Paul's character; for the way in which the principles applied by St. Paul to Corinthian parties and Corinthian society are brought to bear upon the parties and society of this age; and especially valuable for their *method* of exposition. They form almost a manual of the mode in which the Epistles should be treated in the pulpit. For this reason they were likely to be more acceptable to clergymen and teachers of the Bible than to the generality of readers. And so it has proved. From ministers of all sections of the Church and of Dissent, even from those who differ most widely from Mr. Robertson's opinions, testimonies to the value of these Lectures have been received.

As to these opinions themselves, an interesting letter, written to a Roman Catholic friend will be found—No. cxi.—in which he states his position in the Church, and the principles on which he taught during the year 1851.

In October he crossed to Ireland for his usual rest, and returned to Brighton in November. It will be seen, from his letters, how strong an interest he took in the movements of Kossuth, and with what wise calmness, despite of all his enthusiasm for liberty and against oppression, he endeavoured to penetrate to the root of the question of Hungary.

He crowned the year and his exertions in the cause of social reform by a lecture to working men at Hurstpierpoint—notes of which have been published. The main ideas were borrowed from Channing's 'Essay on the Elevation of the Working Classes;'

but he clothed them with such new thought that he made them altogether his own. So closed for him the year 1851. It was a year during which his work, ever arduous and wearing, was rendered doubly so by misconception and attack, and by the pressure and pain of advancing disease. But he bore up nobly and endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. From this time forth till his death his life and energy were those of a racehorse, the spirit of which needs no spur, but which dies at the winning-post exhausted by its victory.

*Letters from March 14 to
December 5, 1851.*

LXXXVIII.

To a Friend.

March 14, 1851.

Thank you most gratefully for the 'Stones of Venice.' There are no writings which, at the present moment, offer such interest to me as Ruskin's. They give a truth to repose on which is real, whatever else is unreal; and as a relief from the *dim* religious light of theology, in which one seems to make out the outline of a truth and the next moment lose it in hopeless mystery and shadows, they are very precious—more precious than even works which treat of scientific truth, such as chemistry, for *they* do not feed the heart, and that is the thing that aches and craves in us just now to a degree that makes the resentment against such people as Miss Martineau on the one side, and the evangelicals on the other, almost *savage*. I have been and am reading the 'Modern Painters' again, with renewed enjoyment and sense of soothing.

You do not 'get a clear conception of truths.' You are 'less able wholly to understand.' Could it be otherwise? If,

instead of a clearer conception, you are getting a grander idea, even though it should give a bewildering sense of indefiniteness and infinitude, is not this gain rather than loss? Who can 'understand?' If a man understands spiritual truth, I should think he *knows*, because he feels little about it. If you are exchanging measurable maxims for immeasurable principles, surely you are rising from the mason to the architect. 'Seven times?' No—no—no—seventy times seven. No maxim—a heart principle. I wonder whether St. Peter *wholly understood* that, or got a very clear *conception* from it. A sublime idea he did, no doubt, which would for ever and for ever outgrow the outline of any dogmatic definition; but just so far as St. Peter could define less what he believed on that point, he would know more. And yet I dare say there were respectable Pharisees in that day who would gravely shake their heads and say, that it was a dangerous thing to do away with old-established rules, and throw a man upon the feelings of a vague unlimited principle.

It seems to me that this feeling of vagueness is inevitable when we dare to launch out upon the sea of truth. I remember that half-painful, half-sublime sensation in the first voyage I took out of sight of land when I was a boy; when the old landmarks and horizon were gone, and I felt as if I had no home. It was a pain to find the world so large. By degrees the mind got familiarised to that feeling, and a joyful sense of freedom came. So I think it is with spiritual truth. It is a strangely desolate feeling to perceive that the 'Truth' and the 'Gospel' that we have known were but a small home-farm in the great universe, but at last I think we begin to see sun, moon, and stars as before, and to discover that we are not lost, but free, with a latitude and longitude as certain, and far grander than before.

LXXXIX.

I spent last evening with Mrs. Jameson

and Lady Byron. The conversation turned at first chiefly on the gradual changes in the feeling towards the Virgin, which are marked by the forms of representation of her. It seems that the earliest appearance of the Virgin and Child dates in the fifth century; before that the Virgin was alone. The first representations of this change bore a striking resemblance to the heathen statues and *rilievos* of Juno nursing the infant Mars. Then came pictures in which the Virgin is represented as crowned by her Son—at first kneeling before Him, then sitting a little lower than He, then on a level with Him. For many ages she appears as intercessor between Christ the Judge and the guilty earth; in this respect personifying the idea which, among many modern Christians, is personified by Christ as the Lord of compassion: while He represented that conception which they now assign to the Father, offended wrath, needing intercession, and scarcely appeased. This shows, however, I think, the radical truth of the idea. Love and justice are really one—different sides of each other; love to that which is like God is alienation from that which opposes Him. In this light, too, the heart realises Him as a unity, when the intellect is subordinated, and does not dialectically divide, that is, in our highest moral state; but when the understanding begins to busy itself with these conceptions, they are necessarily conceived of as two, not one, and the beings in whom they inhere are necessarily conceived of as distinct.

I look upon that Middle Age statement, and the more modern one, only as forms, and perhaps necessary forms, of thought, which are false in the higher regions of belief in which the heart, loving, lives. She showed me some exquisite forms of the Virgin by the elder painters, when feeling was religious—Perugino, Fra Angelico, Raphael. Afterwards the form became coarse, as the religious feeling died off from art. I asked her how it is that the Romish feeling now is developing itself so much in

the direction of Mariolatry ; and she said that the purer and severer conceptions of the Virgin are coming back again, and visibly marking Romish art.

Briefly, I will tell you what I said in answer to her inquiries. I think Mariolatry was inevitable. The idea most strongly seized in Christianity, of the sanctification of humanity, attached itself to Christ as the man ; but the idea naturally developed contained something more—the sanctification of womanhood. Until, therefore, the great truth that in Christ is neither male nor female—that His was the double nature, all that was most manly and all that was most womanly—could take hold of men, it was inevitable that Christianity should seem imperfect without an immaculate woman. Swedenborgianism has therefore, it seems, a similar dream, and so has even atheism. I am told that Comte, the French philosopher, has broached a somewhat corresponding *rêve* in his 'Anticipations of the Future.' We only want, he thinks, and shall have, the glory of women to worship. He is an atheist. Alas ! if he be right, we shall have to search elsewhere than in the ball-going polkaing frivolities in female form which offer themselves as the modern goddesses.

From this the conversation turned on capital punishment. I declared for it, wishing that it should be abolished for murder, and inflicted only on those who are guilty of wrongs to women. For murder is a trifle—life is not of so much value—and the tenderness for human life is not one of the noblest signs of our times, for it is not commensurable with a hatred of wrong ; whereas in the other case society is worse than unchristian ; that which is wrong in a woman is doubly so in a man, because she does with personal risk what he does with risk to another, in personal security and damnable selfishness.

XC.

I rejoice that you have taken up Ruskin ; only let me ask you to read it very slowly,

to resolve not to finish more than a few pages each day. One or two of the smaller chapters are quite enough—a long chapter is enough for two days, except where it is chiefly made up of illustration from pictures ; those can only be read with minute attention when you have the print or picture to which he refers before you ; and those which you can so see, in the National Gallery, Dulwich, &c., you should study, with the book, one or two at a time. The book is worth reading in this way : study it—think over each chapter and examine yourself mentally, with shut eyes, upon its principles, putting down briefly on paper the heads, and getting up each day the principles that you gained the day before. This is not the way to read many books, but it is the way to read much ; and one read in this way, carefully, would do you more good, and remain longer fructifying, than twenty skimmed. Do not read it, however, with slavish acquiescence ; with deference, for it deserves it, but not more. And when you have got its principles woven into the memory, hereafter, by comparison and consideration, you will be able to correct and modify for yourself. Together with this, I would read carefully some other book of a totally different character ; some narrative of human action and character—if stirring and noble, so much the better. I have just finished the first volume of Major Edwardes' 'Punjaub,' a history of wonderful adventures, but too long. I could not recommend it to you, but some day I will give you a very brief epitome of it.

I am endeavouring to do my work more regularly, simply, and humbly—trying as it is, and against the grain, and deeply as I feel the need of some physical enterprise.

Tell —, with my kind regards, that Louis Blanc's theory requires something besides a warm heart and a quick perception to fairly judge. There are certain laws of society, as certain as the laws of matter, which cannot be reached intuitively, or by feeling, but require study—very hard

study; and the misfortune of his theory is, that appealing to those whose feelings are quick, and sense of the wrongs of things as they are—acute, it is very fascinating; but whether it is true or not, demands a far calmer study of the laws of the universe than his superficial theory generally gets. Feeling says, 'Relieve the beggar, and you cannot be wrong;' Fact says, 'The relief of beggary can be proved the worst injury to the community.' Socialism and Fourierism will draw in many generous spirits, but it must bring about, at last, evils tenfold greater than those it would relieve. I never read anything more pitifully self-destructive than the digest of Louis Blanc's doctrine, in a catechism by himself. Succeed it cannot, but it will probably be tried some day, perhaps on a large scale; and if so, the social disorganisation which must ensue, and the agonies and convulsions in which society will reel to and fro, and the reaction from it, will be, perhaps, the most terrible lesson which the world has ever learnt.

This is the invariable result of protection—the forcible compression and hindrance of the laws of nature until they burst. Louis Blanc thinks God has made very bad laws, and he would make better. So thought a wiser than Louis Blanc, or fifty Louis Blancs—Plato. He considered the partialities of maternal love very pernicious, and would have prevented a woman knowing her own child, making her the mother of all the children of the State. Of course maternal partialities are full of evil, but on the whole, that being God's system, will work better than the universalism and state education of Plato, however sublime the conception may seem. The only difficulty is to create the feeling which is to be the motive, that is all. Mr. — the other day was very learnedly descanting before some ladies upon the modern invention of throwing red-hot shot and red-hot shells. Red-hot shot I had heard of at Gibraltar. But I humbly ventured to ask respecting the red-hot shells—how they

got the powder in? That is the difficulty in Louis Blanc's system. Nevertheless, it will be tried; and, like the red-hot shell system, the result will be—an explosion.

XCI.

To one entering London Life.

MY DEAR —,—Gavazzi's Exeter Hall orations and this electro-biology are of the exciting class of stimuli which I reckon dangerous and useless. The first leaves nothing behind, morally or intellectually; the second belongs as yet to the witchcraft and mesmerism class, which may hereafter be reduced to calm rules and become scientific; but at present, except to scientific and classifying minds, I think useful for nothing but to kill the disease of *ennui* by exciting the Athenian desire of *loving* 'some new thing.'

Do let me earnestly entreat you to use force to overcome this craving after stimuli of this class; it is time and money lost. One-tenth part of the time and attention given regularly to the acquisition of some of the branches of information for which London affords so many opportunities would relieve you from *ennui*, and will leave something behind. Suppose you try the mental discipline of giving all the hours which you would fritter on such things to one pursuit—say an interesting attendance on some course of not abstruse lectures. I pray you to grasp my principles, not my rules; for to say *this*, *that*, and *that* are exciting, and leave nothing behind, is to give dead rules. Remember the spirit and philosophy of that which I say.

XCII.

To the Same.

Last night I wrote so rapidly to save the post that possibly my meaning may have been obscure. What I intended to say was this: the life you are now about to enter will be one of an exciting character; diminish it as you will, yet balls, theatres, late hours, varied society, must necessarily

make the atmosphere you breathe highly stimulating. What you want in your other life is a corrective and emollient.

It matters little that you avoid the theatre and music, if in their stead you substitute Gavazzi, with his theatrical *pose* and voice, and his exciting orations. I do not say that under no circumstances it would be desirable to hear him. Were you for months in a dull country town, I should say it might be well to vary its monotony by such an excitement, and its exaggeration might be even wholesome as the counter-active of an extreme; but under present circumstances, if you are really in earnest in your desire to discipline your spirit and get the peace which can alone come from watchfulness, I should say it is one of those indulgences which must be pernicious, though one which, of course, the worn, jaded London ladies must find most delightful, varying their excitement with a fresh stimulus, and giving them horse-radish when they are tired of mustard, cayenne when wearied of horse-radish. This, I believe, Mr. —, too, has done for them, and probably this is what sermons generally accomplish. One spoonful of cayenne to six of mustard, and Soyer himself could not then give such piquancy to their week—would to God I were not a mere pepper-cruet to give a relish to the palates of the Brightonians.

Well, to proceed: I think natural facts most valuable for your mind to repose upon; but the class which you select are precisely those which, instead of giving the repose of philosophic certainty, leave the mind in a whirl of wonder and perplexity: the disputed facts, which are not recognised as facts, which produce controversy and excitement—mesmerism, electro-biology, odology. Half the time—nay, one-tenth of the time—wasted upon the charlatans who invent these, or mystify the real facts contained in them, would put many in possession of truths quite as marvellous, infinitely more beautiful, because their connection with life and usefulness is known, and

far more capable of disciplining the mind towards peace, and rest, and God. I can see no effect produced by the others except bewilderment, dogmatism, or scepticism. Let philosophers examine them, separate the error from the facts, and then we can look at them; but at present, entirely untrained in such studies, we are as little able to distinguish the laws of the universe from jugglery as a ploughman is to separate vaccination from the charm system; and the appeal to judgment in these matters seems to me always a great presumptive proof of something false.

Besides which, the popular mind, always craving belief, takes up implicitly these crude *phenomena* with a reverence which is so much abstracted from rightful objects; and then the vacillation and perpetual uncertainty in which the mind is left produces a glow of excitement which betrays what is in fact the real attractiveness in these pursuits—the power they have to give excitement with no mental trouble. Excitement is the natural reward of toil; but that is a healthy excitement. Felt by the philosopher it is delicious, calm, and productive of valuable exertions; but felt without mental or physical effort, ending in itself, and existing only for the sake of itself, it is, by a just law, self-destructive; just as spirits may be safely taken during hard exercise, but at the peril of him who takes them in a sedentary life.

Oh that I could make every one feel this principle as I feel it—and as a principle! I give many rules, ‘but the letter killeth, the spirit of the law giveth life.’ If men could but get a living insight into the principle, which is to me as clear as noonday, the application of it would be easy; and, as in religious matters, the irksome irritating restriction, ‘Touch not, taste not, handle not’—*this, that, and the other*—would be dispensed with.

XCIH.

I have finished Edwardes’ ‘Punjaub,’ and about to begin it again, though it is

in two thick volumes. I turn to the history of military adventures and to science with a sense of refreshment and home which intensifies as life goes on. Edwardes was a very fine fellow. He went as political agent with a Sikh army to the valley of Bunnoo, which Runjeet Singh had subdued and made tributary, but the tribute of which had never been collected, except once in three or four years, with great bloodshed and war. In three months Edwardes subdued one of the four tribes which inhabit it by negotiation; forced the others to raze with their own hands four hundred forts which might have stood a year's siege; knowing nothing of engineering, built a fortress for the Sikh army, and compelled the refractory Sikhs, who had never done anything of the kind before, to build it; collected the tribute; shot a fanatic who rushed into his tent, after having slain the sentry, to murder him; disbanded a mutinous regiment; tried hundreds of causes in a country where justice had never been heard of before.

To turn to a different question: 'Why was John the most beloved?' I suppose we learn from the fact the rightness of personal preferences—certain minds being more akin to other human minds than certain others—but also that in the highest hearts this affinity will be determined by spiritual resemblances, not mere accidental agreeabilities, accomplishments, or politenesses or pleasant manners. Again, I imagine that the union was one which had nothing to do with mental superiority; that might have been more admirable: John was loveable. Not talent, as in St. Paul's case, nor eloquence, nor amiability, drew Christ's spirit to him, but that large heart, which enabled him to believe because he felt, and hence to reveal that 'God is Love.' It is very remarkable, however, that his love was a trained love. Once John was more zealous than affectionate. But he began by loving the human friend, by tending the mother as a son, by attaching to his brother James; and so, through

particular personal attachments, he was trained to take in and comprehend the larger Divine Love. I should say, then, that he was most loveable, because having loved in their various relationships 'men whom he had seen,' he was able to love 'God whom he had not seen.' He is most dear to the heart of Christ, of course, who loves most, because he has most of God in him; and that love comes through missing none of the preparatory steps of affection, given us here as Primer lessons. . . .

Upon me there is a growing conviction, deepening into a feeling that is at times very solemn and very mournful, that my path lies in a different direction—in humble work done more humbly than I have done it—more in the valley: in simple life, more severe and more solitary. I must mete out what of existence remains to me. Like Hamlet, 'I have had dreams,'* and therefore, like him, am unable to 'count myself king of infinite space.'

XCIV.

The only shade of uneasiness that ever crosses my mind, is the perhaps that it will not end *so*. What I have reason to fear is imbecility. They all admit that. Last night, till dawn to-day, suffering kept me awake, gnashing the teeth, or rather setting them, like poor Prometheus, in defiance of the vulture's beak. Only my vulture was feeding on my cerebellum, and digging its talons in a most uncivil and ferocious way into the organs of emotionness, philoprogenitiveness, obstinacy, &c., &c., leaving the nobler organs free. Now, what is to be said for phrenology after this? Does it not refute the whole system? Had the said bird been pulling at the organs really in use by me—that is, all that is most sublime in humanity—it had been intelligible. But what business on earth

* Robertson was aware that the other reading—'bad dreams'—was perhaps the more correct one; but he always preferred the reading in the text of his letter.

has he to stick his claws into a part of my nature which from the cradle has been protested against, disowned, defied, conquered? Is it revenge being now taken for the victory, and am I to be, like the Princess in the 'Arabian Nights,' consumed by the flames of the genie she had reduced to a cinder? Bad image apart, there is something in the whole matter which perplexes me as a philosophical question and a question of justice; for I know, as indeed the organs indicate, that it is not the overstrained intellect that is wearing life out, but the emotional part of nature which all life long has been breathing flames which kindled none and only burned itself.

XCV.

On reaching home yesterday evening I took down Liebig's 'Chemistry,' and found that the ultimate elements of organic bodies are principally four—viz., carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen. That is, the difference between hair, flesh, bone, and between skin, bark, wood, &c., is caused not so much by their being composed of different elements as by the different proportions in which these four chief ones are mixed up.

In the visions of the night a dream presented itself, mingling this information with the subjects of our conversation, and the question whether woman is merely an unemancipated negro, as you say, her powers and qualities in all respects like those of men, only uncultivated, or, as I say, a being spiritually as well as physically different—having, if you will, all the elements, moral and intellectual, the same in number as man has, only differing in the proportions in which they are mixed up; that difference, however, constituting a difference of nature as real as the difference between leaf and flower, wood and fruit. As *you* say, Woman is to Man what the gristle of a child is to the hard skull of an adult; as *I* say, what the brain is to the skull, or the flesh to the ribs.

Methought I overheard the muscular fibre, *i.e.*, the flesh, of the human body, enviously grumbling against the bones. The flesh averred that it was essentially identical with bone, wanting only a different disposition and a harder education. That great muscle in the centre of the body, the heart, took upon herself the office of champion of the rights of oppressed flesh, and spoke—'Feeble and degraded muscles! after six thousand years of abject inferiority, I summon you in the sacred name of abstract principles. Are we not identically the same as the bones? What are the bones?—carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen. What are we?—the same, minus a few pinches of phosphate of lime. The elements of our nature are identically those of bone. And yet for these long centuries we have been treated as if we were of a softer and feebler nature—condescendingly, insultingly protected from outward injury, as if we could not protect ourselves: looked upon as the ornament and living beauty of the bones; treated—I blush with shame to say it—as the cushions on which the bones repose, as if we were merely existing for their solace and relaxation. Even I, of bonier texture than you, poor slaves! I am bone-locked and hemmed in on every side, unable to expand, cabined, cribbed, confined, forbidden from the development of my noble nature by the coercion of a horrid jealous rib!

(For it may be remarked that the heart, albeit proud of being less soft and less sensitive than other muscles, was yet unable to restrain the use of certain spasmodic *dashed* words, like 'horrid,' which betrayed the existence of more nervous substance and sensibility than she would willingly have admitted. And the occurrence of these, in the midst of slanglike and bonier expressions, produced sometimes an odd confusion.)

Some very tender muscles, situated at the extremity of the fingers, spoke in reply to the swelling heart thus:—

'Wondrous sister! thy words are full of awe; and we have been thrilled with the mighty conception which thou hast suggested to us of being as the bones! But let us take sweet counsel together. Dost not thou sit in the centre of the body, determining the quality of every atom of carbon, hydrogen, and nitrogen, before it passes into the bones? Are not we, then, through thee, our great mother, arbiters of the destiny of those bones, whom thou, with divine indignation, callest horrid? We know that thou art less feebly sensitive than many of us, for we recollect how, in the days of Charles II., thou wast handled alive by a surgeon, and didst not flinch any more than if thou hadst been bone. But we pray thee to consider what would be our fate were we to change our nature. Should we not wear out by our friction, instead of elastically rebounding? Does not our very shrinking save us? Nay, would not the bones be harder still than we, and instead of, as now, loving us and forbearing pressure, come through us, if we did not feel? Besides, some of us have a secret liking for those bones, feel their support, and cling with great affection to our ribs. Thou speakest of great principles, which we do not understand—oxygen and hydrogen. Thou art very wise, and we are very foolish—we only know that flesh is flesh and bone is bone. Thou sayest flesh is bone: but we cannot help thinking that we are as nature made us, and better so. Thou meditatest, mighty philosopheress! on nitrogen and carbon. To us bones are dear. We think that all the discipline which thou recommendest would make us only firmer and healthier flesh, but flesh still, and that only by destruction of our nature could we become bone. We do not wish the bones ever to forget that we are flesh, or to treat us as bone treats bone. We should as soon expect a gentleman in the course of conversation to forget the difference of sex—to consider only mind *versus* mind, and, smiting the feminine possessor of the mind

upon the shoulder, to say, "Come, hold your jaw, old fellow." Most magnanimous heart! we are very tender, and do not like to have it forgotten that we are made of flesh and blood.'

Methought the heart heaved with scorn, and replied:—

'Ye concrete feebleness! I am, then, not as ye are. The abstract principles of my nature are identical with those of the tyrants. I will alter the proportions; I will appropriate a little of the lime which the heartless bones monopolise. I, too, will be a bone.' ('Heartless bones.' N.B.—This was the last touching inconsistency of the flesh of which the heart was ever guilty.)

She persisted in her resolve. By degrees her eloquent and throbbing utterances became stilled in silence. She got harder and harder, and knocked against the ribs, blow for blow, giving knocks and receiving them with interest. The last wish she expressed was to be made acquainted with anatomy practically, being certain that she should be as callous to the knife as any bone.

She got her wish; but it was not until she had become ossified.

Upon the *post-mortem* examination I could not, however, but remark that, even denaturalised as her discipline had made her, she did not look like genuine healthy bone, but a sort of gristle, neither red nor white, neither hard nor soft, but tough—altogether an unnatural, morbid, amorphous mass, like unprepared caoutchouc when you cut it through, only not so elastic.

The surgeon shrugged his shoulders, and dropped her into a jar of spirits of wine, to take her place among the monstrosities of an anatomical museum, observing that she was too hard for a feminine pincushion and too soft for a masculine cannon-ball.

Glenara, Glenara, now read me my dream.

XCVI.

May 7.

— was very enthusiastic about Louis Blanc, his philanthropy, his *beaux yeux noirs* and *pensées*, his aristocratic bearing, and *bien gantées* hands. It is very difficult, in a woman's enthusiasm for a system, to eliminate the adventitious and personal influences and get at the real amount of intelligent and genuine admiration of the *belles idées* which remains as a residuum behind. Ravignan and socialism—nay, perhaps I may add with a little sly malice, Mazzinianism, mesmerism, to say nothing of homœopathy—would contend against us, dull careworn expositors of threadbare truths, with fearful odds on their side, if *beaux yeux noirs* and white gloves are to be unconsciously accepted as legitimate weapons.

I am sorry I could not go with you to the Exhibition opening, but as circumstances then were it would have been impossible. I was in a very small humour for any enjoyment whatever. For myself I do not feel the smallest regret. Gala days and processions never, even as a boy, gave me any pleasure, and I always feel inclined to moralise in the Hamlet vein when I see grown men and women playing at theatricals off the stage. For instance, the pageant which I saw on the opening of Parliament suggested no thoughts but those which belong to a sense of the ridiculous. A review, suggesting the conception of a real battle, is a different thing, and impresses me to tears. I cannot see a regiment manœuvre nor artillery in motion without a choking sensation, but poms with feathers and jewels and fine carriages always make me sad or else contemptuous. Pageants never leave a sense of grandeur, but always of meanness and paltriness, on my mind. It is not so with a mountain or a picture. I would far, far rather go through the Exhibition without a crowd, and quietly get a few ideas, as I trust I shall do.

I am delighted to find that you enjoy the Exhibition. When did I despise it as a frivolous thing? The pomp of the procession I cannot care for—the Exhibition itself is improving and intellectual.

XCVII.

Ralph King, Lady Lovelace's son, who has taken a strange fancy to venerate me, came down from town with his tutor to be at church on Sunday, by his own wish. He came to breakfast with me on Monday, and with great *naïveté* and originality expressed his interest in the view I had taken on Sunday of the non-spirituality of the yearning for death, and remarked 'that it was suicide without the courage of suicide.' An evangelical lady came into the vestry to express her bewilderment at the doctrine. I replied that I thought it was best to set a standard that was real, actual, and human, not one either insincerely or morbidly professed; that many an evangelical clergyman, after an ultra-spiritual discourse, in which desire for heaven and God at once was taught as the only Christian feeling, would go home and sit over his glass of port very comfortably, satisfied with it as before, until heaven comes—which I considered a sure way of making all unreal. 'Well,' said she, 'I thought you, of all people, were like St. Paul, and that you would wish for a heavenlier life as much as he did.' 'First of all,' said I, 'you thought wrong; next, if I do wish to die, it is when I am in pain, or out of conceit with life, which happens pretty often, but which I do not consider spirituality. It is only an ungracious way of saying, "I am dissatisfied with what Thou hast given me, and do not like the duties that are mine at all. I am in pain, and want to be out of pain." And I suppose a great many very commonplace people could say the same piece of sublime discontent. Could not you?'

The fair saint was silenced.

XCVIII.

To a Member of his Congregation.

Brighton: May 9, 1851.

MY DEAR —,—I thank you much for the interesting letter you sent me, which I enclose. I did not know Mr. — beyond the acquaintance of a single evening, but was extremely pleased with his son-in-law. He is at rest, I doubt not, now—in that deep awful rest which is the most endearing of all the attributes of the life that shall be—the rest which is order instead of disorder—harmony instead of chaotic passions in jar and discord, and duty instead of the conflict of self-will with His loving will. It is a noble thought, and I never hear of any one who has probably attained it without a feeling of congratulation rising to the lips. You sign yourself ‘gratefully.’ If that is in reference to any good in instruction you may think you have derived from my ministry—and I can conceive no other—there is in the kind feeling far more to humble me than to give me joy. May God bless you!

XCIX.

To the Same.

Brighton: May 16, 1851.

MY DEAR —,—I am deeply grateful for your note, but, I can only say again, more surprised and humbled by it than even gladdened. Yet I can rejoice, if not for my own sake, yet for yours. That a ministry full of imperfection and blind darkness should do *any* good is a source to me of ever new wonder. That one in which words and truth, if truth come, wrung out of mental pain and inward struggle, should now and then touch a corresponding chord in minds with which, from invincible and almost incredible shyness, I rarely come in personal contact, is not so surprising, for I suppose the grand principle is the universal one—we can only heal one another with blood—whether it comes from the agony itself,

or the feeble and meaner pains of common minds and hearts. If it were not for such rewards and consolations unexpectedly presenting themselves at times, the Christian Ministry would be, at least to some minds, and in the present day, insupportable. Once more, thank you. I do trust, with all my heart, that your estimate of the effects of what you hear on your own heart may not be delusive. I know that spoken words impress, and that impression has its danger as well as its good. Hence I cannot even rejoice without fear, for I confess that at best pulpit instruction seems to me to be as pernicious as it is efficacious. And Carlyle’s view of stump oratory is only too mournfully true. To spend life and waste all strength of nerve and heart upon it, seems like a duty of sowing the sea-sand.

Still, some good is done, but much less than people think; and the drawback, which you correctly state, is one which must always be allowed for as a very large deduction from its apparent effects—I mean the absence of any immediate opportunity of carrying transient impressions into action, and the exhaustion of the feelings which are perpetually stimulated for no definite result.

At the highest, all I count on is the probability that in many minds a thought here and there may strike root and grow, mixing with life and ordinary trains of feeling a somewhat higher tone than otherwise might have been, and bringing forth results which will be unconscious and utterly untraceable to the mind that originated them, just as it would be impossible to say whence the thistle-down came, that is resulting now in a plentiful crop of weeds, alas!—the simile is an ominous one—on the downs above.

C.

To the Same.

Brighton: May 17, 1851.

MY DEAR —,—I send you back Carlyle’s letter. I have read Bushnell; there

are some good things in him, but on the whole I think him most shadowy and unsatisfactory. He does not sufficiently show that dogmas express eternal verities and facts; that they are what a mathematician might call approximative formulas to truth. In this spirit I always ask—what does that dogma mean? Not what did it mean in the lips of those who spoke it? How, in my language, can I put into form the underlying truth, in correcter form if possible, but in only approximative form after all? In this way purgatory, absolution, Mariolatry, become to me fossils, not lies.

Of course people speak bitterly against my teaching, and of course I feel it keenly. But I cannot help it, and I cannot go out of my way to conciliate opposition and dislike. Misapprehension will account for part. Partly the divergence is real. But to place the spirit above the letter, and the principle above the rule, was the aim of His Life, and the cause of the dislike He met with: therefore I am content. And this, by the way, affords an answer to one part of your perplexity—viz., whether it be not dangerous to draw so exact a parallel between His office and ours? I only reply that, except in feeling a fellowship and oneness with that Life, and recognising parallel feelings and parallel struggles, triumphantly sometimes, I do not see how life could be tolerable at all. He was Humanity, and in Him alone my humanity becomes intelligible. Do not tremble at difficulties and shoreless expanses of truth, if you feel drifting into them. God's truth must be boundless. Tractarians and Evangelicals suppose that it is a pond which you can walk round and say, 'I hold the truth.' What, all? 'Yes, all; there it is, circumscribed, defined, proved, and you are an infidel if you do not think this pond of mine, that the great Mr. Scott, and Mr. Newton, and Mr. Cecil dug, quite large enough to be the immeasurable Gospel of the Lord of the universe.'

Dare to be alone with God, my dear —, trust Him, and do not fear that He will leave you in darkness long, though His light may dazzle. Was not HE alone in this world?—unfelt, uncomprehended, suspected, spoken against? And before Him was the cross. Before us, a little tea-table gossip, and hands uplifted in holy horror. Alas! and we call that a cross to bear. Shame! yet still I do admit, that for a loving heart to lack sympathy is worse than pain. Do not hesitate to ask me about anything that I say, if it seem difficult. I would gladly explain to any of my congregation anything I meant to say, if I said it obscurely, or if it seemed to conflict with their conceptions. But to you, at any time, I will with true enjoyment give such explanation, so never doubt about asking me.

CI.

To the Same.

Brighton: May 21, 1851.

MY DEAR —,—The question you put is by no means an easy one to answer: whether, namely, it be right and wise for you to read on both sides of the question—or rather, I should say, questions? for on this subject they are endless, and grow up like Hydra's heads.

I could not reply, No: for that is the very advice given by the Romish Church, which we so much blame; and it is very inconsistent in us to condemn their prohibitions of heretical or Protestant books to the laity, if we, Tractarian or Evangelical clergy, forbid, as is constantly done, the perusal of books which we judge heretical. We say they are afraid of the truth, else they would not forbid inquiry; and I do not see why Unitarians, Rationalists, or Sceptics, might not retort the same charge on us. The fact, however, that they who so condemn the Romish Church find themselves compelled to very inconsistently imitate their conduct, is a proof, I think, that

even in that most anti-Protestant proceeding there is a truth, inevitably acted on by every one in his own way, if we could only disengage it.

Now, first of all, the questions of religious truth are interminable, and a lifetime would scarcely suffice to even pass the outworks of them all. Next, very few minds are in possession of the means or of the severe mental training which qualifies a man to set out as an original discoverer of truth; so that if we cannot begin with a large number of truths, which must be considered as first principles and settled, life must be one perpetual state of Pyrrhonism and uncertainty.

On the other hand, to refuse to examine when doubts arise is spiritual suicide; and I do not see how, on this principle, any progress in truth could ever have been made. Why should the Pharisees have been blamed for the views so long stereotyped, or the Jews for remaining in Judaism?

One consolation, however, at once suggests itself. The condition of arriving at truth is not severe habits of investigation, but innocence of life and humbleness of heart. Truth is felt, not reasoned, out; and if there be any truths which are only appreciable by the acute understanding, we may be sure at once that these do not constitute the soul's life, nor error in these the soul's death. For instance, the metaphysics of God's Being; the '*plan*,' as they call it, 'of salvation;' the exact distinction between the divine and human in Christ's Person. On all these subjects you may read and read till the brain is dizzy and the heart's action is stopped; so that of course the mind is bewildered. But on subjects of Right and Wrong, Divine and Diabolic, Noble and Base, I believe sophistry cannot puzzle so long as the life is right.

I should say, therefore—

1. Remember how much is certain. Is there any doubt about the Sermon on the Mount? Whether, for instance, the Beati-

tudes are true to fact? Whether the pure in heart shall see God? Any doubt, whether to have the mind of Christ be salvation and rest? Well, if so, you may be content to leave much, if God will, to unfold itself slowly; if not, you can quietly wait for Eternity to settle it.

2ndly. I think the only thing that can be said is broadly this: I would not read controversially. In this bewildered age of 'Yeast' (by the bye, the author of 'Yeast' ought not to cry out about fermentation, unless he can show how it can be made bread, nor ought any one, duty now being rather to be silent)—in this age of 'Yeast,' an age in which, like Diana's worshippers, all are crying out loudly, the greater part not knowing why, or what the questions really are, it seems to me that the more we confine ourselves to simple duties the better. Be assured that there is little to be known here: much to be borne: something to be done. What you are, and what your life means, you do not know. God only knows. You must be content with twilight, except when contrast with darkness makes the twilight seem, as it really is in comparison, a blaze of light.

Specially, in your own case, would not this be your duty? You have regular appointed teaching with which you are not dissatisfied. I should be the last to urge you to blind yourself by it, or refuse to receive light from any other quarter which, *presenting itself*, might make that teaching seem wrong; but so long as it appears to you not darkness, but light, surely it would be wisest, for your own peace and the harmony of your life, not to go *out of the way* to investigate and seek for views which may make that little light questionable. Try, rather, to live upon the truths you have for certain, and let them become firmer and firmer. How can you expect to fathom questions in which the wisest of the age have been sounding in vain? This conviction once settled, I think we shall become content to wait—a great lesson; and let God

teach us by degrees, instead of fancying we can find it all out by effort. Do you remember Wordsworth's—

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

We do not trust God; we trust ourselves. We do not believe that He seeks us; we fancy we have to seek Him. We are anxious to know *all about* God, and meanwhile we never think of knowing *God*. God, instead of religion, and much more, God, instead of theology, is what we need to believe in.

I would avoid all controversy, written or spoken, if I were you. Controversy with acquaintances mystifies, renders you suspected, and embitters your own heart. Besides, how can you explain what you think or feel with no endorsed words which will be honoured, as the bankers say? Then the controversial books of the day are so merely 'Yeast,' that they will leave your mind bewildered. I myself follow this plan as much as possible. I mix little with the religious world, and so avoid discussion. I read little of divinity, much more of literature, though that, from mental prostration, is now next to nothing. And I try to trust in God—God and my own soul; there is nothing else to trust to. And I am sure I should be giving you dreary advice were I to say, read on all sides of the question. No, I rather say, trust in God—live in Him—do His will—and rest.

CII.

— is a very sensible, good, and, I should think, wise man. I like what he says about the impossibility of any man being comprehensive, and not French, German, English, &c. There has been but one Son of *Man*.

Poor Comte! I recollect that there is in his work the usual amount of French vanity and nationality, which mars everything great. They have not a world-wide man: with all our egotism, we have. And, in-

deed, I think all our greatest men are more universal, more submissive to eternal and not merely conventional laws. Compare the Duke and Napoleon, though the talent of the latter was probably far greater.

Well, I care very little for the progress of society, if that only means that, some centuries hence, individuals will eat, drink, and sleep more abundantly and more cleanly than the masses now, those individuals being mortal, perishable, and dying out for ever. They take away all that makes humanity grand, and then ask you to care for it and its progress. I care for religion—for the hope of a *church*; that is, a society more united in each other, because more united in God. But separate from that, and the possibilities of nobleness which that involves, the destinies of the race appear to me little more interesting than the contemplation of the prospects of a tray of silkworms—obscene and crawling reptiles, which may hereafter become moths, and die, when the eggs are only laid. The whole universe, in this aspect, is to me a hideous phantasm—the cruel practising-shop of some demon experimentalist, who creates Frankensteins to be wretched and accursed, and makes them better every new attempt. Pleasant consolation for us—no! me, the Frankenstein, to know that some centuries hence there will be no more anomalous, semi-noble, semi-banned, and blighted Frankensteins.

No, no, no! There is some better thing than that; and French atheism must get a human, humble, loving heart before it can even guess what.

CIII.

May, 1851.

I send you a letter which I received from Mr. Drew, pressing me into the service. This morning I had a long visit from Mr. Maurice, which kept me from writing to you at length. His countenance is benign, full of thought, marked with sorrow—but conquered sorrow. Probably, from knowing his mind beforehand, I read large

powers of sympathy with Humanity. He told me, simply and strongly, that he had seen and been pleased with my published addresses. I ought not to have said a long visit; it was under an hour, as he had to go off by the eleven o'clock train. I again declined joining in the course of lectures—this time chiefly on the ground of health, for, indeed, I feel shattered, mentally unfit for such an effort, nor have I any desire left for prominence; the valley of existence is most fit for me. I am young enough in years, but too grey in heart, to buffet with the mountain tempests which blow on more lofty situations. Maurice, gentlemanly and calm, about fifty years of age, spoke less than I did. I was ashamed to feel that I had the talking to myself, and learned nothing except a lesson of humility. He thinks that the clergy of the Church of England may be now the leaders of the nation, if they will only give up the phantom of power for its reality, and sympathise with the working classes heartily and truly.

I have to be at the lecture to-night, so I must conclude.

CIV.

May 24.

Your account of your conversation with Brewster and Ashburner is very interesting. Some time ago I know that Faraday said he considered that they were just in sight of the discovery of the principle of life, 'the distant discovery was already felt trembling along the line.' It is enough to make one's brain reel, indeed, to think on these things.

It appears to me, however, that great mistakes are made in the expectations entertained with respect to what science can do. The scientific mode of viewing things is simply human: it is not God's way. Creation is one thing—dissection is another. Dissection separates into organic parts, shows the flesh laid on the skeleton, &c.; but God did not make first a skeleton and then flesh. Life organised to itself its own body. And so too, according to Science,

the final cause of the sensibility of the skin, and the insensibility of the parts below the skin, is the protection of the parts most exposed from injury. The extremities of the fingers are most sensitive; the heart and bones have few nerves. Had this been reversed, had the skin been apathetic and the interior parts sensitive, great pain would have been the result, to no purpose, and the parts exposed might have been destroyed, burnt, or broken without giving warning of danger; whereas, as it is, the most delicate parts, like the eyelid, are protected by an acute sensibility, which defends them at the most distant approach of injury.

Well, the anatomist says the final cause of this arrangement, that is, the end which was the cause of its being so arranged, was the protection of the structure. Of course the anatomist can go no further; but there are ends, which the anatomist's science does not even touch, subserved by these sensibilities—the education, for instance, of the character and heart through pain; a much higher end, properly speaking, more truly the final cause of pain, than the preservation of the organic framework from harm. In all such departments Science must for ever be at fault. She has not the organ nor the intuitive sense whereby their truths are discovered. It is like attempting to explain the ecstasies of music by mathematics. Mathematics have to do with music, because music coincides with mathematical truths and principles; but there is something in music which no mere mathematician can pronounce upon or discover—a something which the very child who has an ear knows by intuition. He can tell the child, and Jenny Lind herself, the laws on which her science rests, much better than Jenny Lind knows, or with the deepest study could know; but then the spirit and life of it—he is a miserable *charlatan* if he pretends to say a word about them as discovered, or even discoverable, by mathematical science.

So with electricity, phrenology, &c.; they

can tell us phenomena, but what lies beyond those phenomena they cannot tell for ever. And the pretence to do it is the great absurdity of these *charlatans*, like Mr. Atkinson and Co. Christ told us, but by the intuitions of the soul, not by science.

I wonder whether this is intelligible, for I am so really worn in mind, far rather than in body, that I can scarcely get my mind to work at the simplest thought, without a sensation of restlessness. I wish it were not so, but this will all come round with time and rest.

CV.

Thanks for the information respecting Mrs. —. I am afraid to go, lest my conception of the characters should be again linked with inferior associations. I do not think any woman could understand Macbeth or Macduff, only because both their good and bad are essentially masculine. And Lady Macbeth must be either sublime or ludicrous. Twenty to one on the latter. I wish I had heard 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' but I was otherwise engaged.

I return Sterling, &c. You must take the consequences of reading 'The Law of Man's Nature.' It is a book thoroughly worthless, but it also leaves a mental degradation which I would not accept as the price of the highest intellectual banquet. The author has done with Humanity what a certain lady did with a bone of a brother's skeleton—made a whistle of it, and with equal good taste and good feeling. Luckily, the concord of sweet sounds was not very bewitching in either case, and if you persevere in hearing the whole concert you will have more patience and less inclination to wince from the discords of a heart out of tune from vanity than I had. I felicitate upon your prospect of drinking in for two days the music of the charnel house. By the bye, there is one inference worth drawing from the book. Whoever dethrones God, and sneers at Christ, must

end in some such worship as—the idolatry of Mr. Mesmerist Atkinson.

CVI.

June, 1851.

In a letter I have just read of H. Martineau's, she says that her life was a series of abject discipleships till now, when she is 'independent.' I am glad you dislike the book. It is the most offensive I have read for a long time—not because of its atheism, naked as that is, but because of the impertinent assumption of superiority which characterises the letters of these inspired two. I can conceive a severe science compelling a mind step by step to the atheistic conclusions; and that mind, loyal to truth, refusing to ignore the conclusions or to hide them. But then I can only conceive this done in a noble sadness, and a kind of Divine infinite pity towards the race which are so bereft of their best hopes; and have no patience with a self-complacent smirk which says, 'Shut up the prophets; read Martineau and Atkinson. Friendship, Patriotism, are mesmerised brain; Faith a mistake of the stomach; Love a titillatory movement occurring in the upper part of the nape of the neck; Immortality the craving of dyspepsia; God a fancy produced by a certain pressure upon the grey parts of the hasty-pudding within the skull; Shakspeare, Plato, Hannibal, and all they did and wrote, weighed by an extra ounce or two of said pudding.'

It is the flippant tone in which the most solemn hopes of the noblest humanity are disposed of that disgusts me. Besides, the angelic pair have deduced from their premises a conclusion of disproved, instead of not proven, which is all that science can ever pretend to show. She is inexcusable for saying that her limited capacities are to be the measure of all that is knowable. If there be a cause in this universe the effect of which she cannot perceive, that cause may be God, which simple possibility is quite sufficient to upset all she advances.

CVII.

June, 1851.

I send you the article on Carlyle. Pray read it. It contains *some* truth and much falsehood—the truth itself so torn from coherence with other parts of Carlyle's meaning as to be false. For instance, in column 2 he says that Carlyle reckons Christianity the most palpable sham and cobweb that ever superstition and hypocrisy invented; which is simply a slander and a lie, as he might have seen by a quotation he makes himself in column 3: 'Sterling read a great deal; earnest books—the Bible, *most earnest* of books, and his chief favourite.'

Lie the second may be found where he says that the only persons for whom Carlyle's heart seems to beat with congenial sympathy are the anarchists of Europe, &c. This after reading Carlyle's 'French Revolution' (if he did).

Of course the critique contains truth. Carlyle does cry out too much, in a way that has now become cant, against cant and shams, never even hinting a remedy; but this reviewer has never got into the atmosphere which he breathes, nor attempted to master his meaning and objects, without which thorough comprehension no one has a right to criticise.

CVIII.

June, 1851.

Thanks for 'Owen.' I fear I shall have no time to read him, but I will try.

The necessarian scheme is intellectually impregnable; practically, an enormous falsehood; and in matters practical popular ideas are right, just as they are in metaphysical. There can be no Matter, metaphysics say, and say, it seems to me, irrefragably; but the popular conception is practically the true one, and the very highest philosophy, when it has completed the circle, gets back to that again.

So of the necessarian scheme. It is a half-truth, and we shall flounder away into

fearful self-correction if we take the 'Constitution of Man' instead of the prophets, economic well-being instead of the Gospel, and pet vice and crime as amiable diseases. I am still, in *many cases*, for the Christian virtue of an English oak-stick, with an English hand to lay it on, and show mercy when you have done justice.

Nevertheless, even this one-sided scheme contains a truth. It is quite true that poverty comes from crime; but it is also true that crime is often the result of poverty. Craniology, education, circumstances, &c., are causes, and must not be ignored. But they are not the only causes, and there is a something which can rise above all nobly. Else I think the defence of the prisoner to his judge, when tried for stealing, was unanswerable: *Mais, mon Dieu, monsieur, il faut vivre.*

In my humble opinion the judge's reply, however, on necessarian principles, was quite as philosophical when he said, *Je n'en vois pas la nécessité*, and sentenced the thief to death.

I was well aware of the fact about the invisibility of the sunbeam till it impinges on earthly particles. Therefore I hold this visible universe to be the word of expression of God, who is visible thereby. I do not hold 'material manifestations insufficient for spirituality,' and only interrogate each such manifestation, 'Of *what* art thou a manifestation?' For instance, a Lord Mayor's feast is a manifestation, and a very material one, of large resources, great contrivance, and vast aldermanic intellect. I acknowledge that I find it insufficient to prove great spirituality, though it is to a Greenlander's train-oil feast what the Exhibition is to his canoe. Multiply the alderman's paradise by the accumulated science of a thousand years, and I do not think it proves us a bit nearer the conversion of this earth into a kingdom of God. I will accept, however, a dish of *un*-crimped cod on a Christian's table, if you can find it, as such an evidence; or a soup-kitchen, or a ducal suggestion of curry-powder for

starving people, provided it comes off his own plate. But the invention of piquant sauces, luxurious furniture, tasteful jewellery, &c., &c., &c., I humbly decline to accept as proofs of anything beyond the fact that man is a very sagacious and surprising beaver. A spirit? *Non, mille fois non*, unless he can show something more than this. Poor Robert Owen's book, right or wrong, raises Humanity, in my eyes, above a thousand Exhibitions. Cheops and Cephrenes built great pyramids; so did Rhamsinitus, a brick one, very marvellous in its day—a new era in building, they say, as when glass superseded brick. The spirituality of those 'material manifestations?' Mummy of the sacred cat! whose dry carcase has rested there these three thousand years at the expense of the life and breath of the myriad wretches who toiled for their pay of a few onions—say how we shall unswathe the spirituality of that most manifest materialism out of thy most holy cerements. And yet I fancy the progress of the race was made thereby 'patent to the masses,' by a very royal patent! I grant the grandeur of the understanding and 'beaverism.' I only say that I measure the spirituality of the grandest undertaking by the degrees of its unselfishness.

Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow:

The rest is all but leather and prunello.

CIX.

June, 1851.

I have been reading some of Leigh Hunt's works lately, the 'Indicator,' 'A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla,' and am surprised at the freshness, and sweetness, and Christian, not lax, spirit of human benevolence and toleration which existed in the heart of one who was the contemporary, and even colleague, of Byron. The 'Indicator,' a series of papers like the 'Spectator,' &c., is a most refreshing collection of ancient stories and kind-hearted literary

gossip. 'The Jar of Honey' is, in fact, nothing more than a collection of all the sweet things that poetry has hived up for centuries in the literature of Sicily, from the times of Polyphemus, &c., &c., down to those of Theocritus, and even to the present day. There is no very transcendent talent anywhere, but good taste, refinement, tolerably extensive reading, and the springiness of a kind heart, imparting a life and newness to all he says.

You were unfortunate about Covent Garden Market; but it is not always so. Sometimes the brightness of that hour in London is very remarkable. Your description of the fog, dirt, smoke, bustle, &c., made me feel how little, how very, very little, we know and think of the suffering life of our fellow-creatures. To get a dish of green peas, or young potatoes, on a West-End table, how much toil and unknown deprivation must be gone through by human beings! It seems to me a great and good lesson to go through these crowded places to see what life is—the life of the millions, not the few—and then to think of our æsthetics, as Kingsley said—and our life one long pursuit of enjoyment, and disappointment if we do not get it. When life to us, from mere heat, is simply endurance, what must it be to those who have only the shady side of a burning house to shelter them, and that only for a few minutes?—for if they stop, there will be no supper that day at home.

About Pascal's opinion, that, as beauty perishes, attachment for the sake of beauty is not attachment—well, I do not know. Mind gets weak; therefore to be attached to a person for mental qualification is not, &c., &c.; and character changes, therefore he who was attached to that which did not last was not attached at all. I do not think this is true. Beauty may be a lower cause of attachment, but I suppose persons may be really attached *for* that, not merely *to* that; and quite true that in a low nature that will be a low attachment. I do not think that in a high one it must. In some

it kindles high and self-devoted feelings, just as in a degraded and sensual nature it produces selfish ones. Besides, it is untrue to say that *la petite vérole* will extinguish it necessarily; it may have begun on account of beauty, and then gone on to something higher. Chivalry, gratitude, habits of tenderness, I believe, would retain affection, provided it had not been quenched already. No, it would not be *la petite vérole* that would undermine it, but moral deformity which had been discovered uncorresponding to outward beauty. I am quite certain that beauty attracts an unvitiated heart only because it seems, by a law of our thought, the type of mental and moral beauty; and where these are not, disgust and reaction would come sooner and more surely than from small-pox. Further, I think that where qualities are loved and appreciated by habit, the beauty of feature is no longer observed, nor its absence missed. Expression reminds of what we know of the person, and the shape and colour are actually forgotten. The ugliest man I ever knew I actually at last thought handsome; and I do not believe that any beauty would seem surpassingly beautiful after it had once reminded of folly or evil.

CX.

Thank you for your account of the 'Associations Ouvrières.' The time is coming, no doubt, when in some form or other this principle will be tried. I do not expect that it can be the final form of human co-operation. It is too artificial and, at present, only another shape of protection: for which reason I cannot feel very enthusiastic about the 'self-sacrifice' which you think it implies. However, I am willing to accept it as a step to better things. That inalienable capital which your friends are forming, to belong only to the association, will, after a time, become the capital of a wealthy corporation; and if many such corporations should arise, the struggle of the next generation will be to break them

down: they will be bloated aristocracies of the year 2000, and the chivalry of that age will be exhibited in a crusade against them.

The elective affinities cannot hold five men together for a month. I wonder where we shall find a principle of cohesion to bind men together really, except interest; for chartisms and socialisms are only this.

I saw a family of love at the Zoological Gardens—five leopards together, kissing and playing with one another. By-and-by a keeper came with sundry joints of a murdered sheep. The brothers began to growl and bite, each seized a bone and went off to his corner, snarling, and unable to enjoy for fear.

CXI.

To a Roman Catholic Friend.

July 1, 1851.

MY DEAR MRS. —,—I will briefly answer your question. What am I?

Not an eclectic, certainly.

An eclectic is one who pieces together fragmentary opinions culled out of different systems on some one or other principle of selection.

I endeavour to seize and hold the spirit of every truth which is held by all systems under diverse, and often in appearance contradictory, forms.

I will give you an instance.

A very short time ago, Mrs. Jameson was showing me the sketches she had made for her new work on Christian Art, exhibiting the gradual progress in the worship of the Virgin.

At first the sculptures were actual copies of known heathen goddesses with a child in arms; then the woman kneeling before the Son—next the woman crowned, on a throne with the Son, but lower; after that, on the same throne on a *higher* level; lastly, the Son in wrath, about to destroy the universe, and the mother interposing her woman's bosom in intercession. These were distinctly different in date.

Well, I remembered at once, this is what

the Evangelicals do in another way. They make two Gods, a loving one and an angry one—the former saving from the latter. Both, then, agree in this, that the anger and the love are expressed as resident in different personalities.

Now here I get a truth. Not by eclecticism, taking as much of each as I like, but that which both assert; and then I dispense with the formal expression of the thought. The Son and the Virgin, the Father and the Son, opposed to each other; this is the form of thought, in both false; the human mind's necessity of expressing objectively the opposition of two truths by referring them to different personalities, leaving them thus distinct, real, and undestroyed by a namby-pamby blending of the two into one, I recognize as the truth of both.

The Evangelical 'scheme' of reconciling justice with mercy I consider the poorest effort ever made by false metaphysics. They simply misquote a text. That he might be just [and yet] the justifier. Whereas St. Paul says, the just and the justifier: *i.e.* just *because* the justifier. The Romish view is as usual materialistic, but both express the same felt necessity. And, in fact, truth is always the union of two contradictory propositions, both remaining undiluted—not the *via media* between them.

The Romish view, however coarsely and materially, expresses another truth. In Christ is 'neither male nor female.' Now the common view of His incarnation had only exhibited the fact that man, meaning the masculine sex, had become in Him divine. Soon, however, the world began to feel—womanly qualities are divine too. Not the courage and the wisdom, which used to be deified, but the graces which Christianity has emphatically pronounced blessed. Now they did not perceive that this truth is contained in the incarnation of Him in whom met all that was most womanly and all that was most manly: that divine manhood means not divine masculinity, but divine humanity, containing both sexes as the mutual supplement of each

other. Accordingly, what was left for them but to have a queen of heaven as well as a Son of God?

It is very curious that M. Comte, the French infidel, has, in his way, felt the same necessity. In his last work, I am told, he speaks of woman-worship as that which the age wants.

Thus, then, out of Evangelicalism and Romanism, I get one and the same truth. And out of Romanism and Atheism I get another truth—not eclectically, but just as I should get oxygen out of rust, carbonic acid, mould, and then hold oxygen as one of the principles of the universe, because I found it in almost everything.

My system, no doubt, is vague; but it saves me from dogmatism, for I know that my mode of expressing the truth so eliminated is just as much a form as the mode of Romanism, Evangelicalism, or Atheism, and may become just as bigoted and narrow; only I am quite saved, I believe, from gazing upon anything but the invisible and the eternal as reality. Meanwhile I try to feel with all, not as a latitudinarian, but so far as all or any hold, even formally and bigotedly, truths. And I feel that to them in that stage, *that* form may be necessary. It also keeps me humble; for I feel how almost impossible it is for a human mind to gaze on realities, essences, truths, except in the concrete—just as oxygen can only be seen in combination with iron, for instance, when it becomes rust; with sulphur, when it becomes sulphuric acid, &c., &c.

Humanly speaking, therefore, it is impossible that I could ever become an Evangelical, a Romanist, or an Infidel. Neither of the two first, because I feel that they have only poor forms of truth, materialistic and metaphysical: not the last, because I feel too deeply, even in his negations, truth; in his 'It is not,' how much more truly 'Something *is*.'

I am blind and ignorant; but I can see this at least, that the blue, red, yellow, &c., reflected from sky and bush and sea, are not the light itself, but only reflected

fragments of the light; the 'elements of the world' on which the light is broken, but yet made visible. Some day you will feel this. *I think you feel it now*, and suspect that Romanism is not finality, but only uncouth stammerings of truth, and very, very coarse.

CXII.

I have had a long correspondence with Maurice and Mr. Drew. I asked Mr. Tower's brother to dinner a day or two ago. He is a sincere, earnest-minded man, very High Church I should think, but, like many of that school, generous and liberal. My visits among the poor to-day included two very sad cases. One, that of a poor family, the father of which is just dead, and the mother a hard-working worthy woman overwhelmed with grief, and crushed by inability to pay the funeral expenses. Only £4! And to think that £4, lavished like pence by tens of thousands of the wealthy people in this country, can make eight or nine human beings free, and the want of it reduce them nearly to starvation. I was able to promise to defray the bill—not all out of my own pocket; the gratitude and relief were touching indeed.

The other case was that of a poor creature, whom I left with what appeared an abscess in the cheek-bone. It is now pronounced cancer. The pain amounts to agony, incessant and intolerable. Morphine stupifies for a short time, and chloride of lime partly purifies the horrors of the mouth; but in that state now for months she must remain, and no earthly power can save her, scarcely any even assuage her torture. Since then I have—not laughed—no, for my laugh is now a ghastly, hollow, false lie of a thing—but I have dined, forgotten, talked, read, written, with no physical pain now to endure. How passing strange that misery of suffering is; and how questionable the right which two-thirds of the world assume to themselves of filling their ears with cotton, that the moans may not break in upon their silken repose,

and that the cry of the toiling thousands may float by on the blast unheard! But suppose that cry goes up to the ears of God, and He asks, 'Whom did you relieve? whom did you clothe? whom did you feed, with your tens, hundreds, or thousands?' Assuredly, protest against Kingsley who will, he stood on a deep awful truth, 'God will yet take account of the selfishness of wealth: and His quarrel has yet to be fought out.' I have been thinking lately much, sadly, self-condemningly.

Had any one preached that all the evils of anarchy and insubordination proceeded from the selfish vanities of the poorer classes, forgetting that a revolution may be goaded on, it would have been one-sided and dangerous; but as soon as ever a man is found to state somewhat too strongly the case of the weak against the strong, the Churchman cries, 'Danger!' Danger to comfort and property, I suppose, which is the only danger that wakes up a protest.

Do not be dismayed or discouraged if the reading of Scripture does not suggest as yet. Receive, imbibe, and then your mind will create; but our mistake lies in thinking that we can give out until we have taken in. In all things this is the order. Poets are creators, because recipients; they open their hearts wide to Nature, instead of going to her with views of her ready-made and second-hand. They come from her and give out what they have felt and what she said to them; so with Scripture—patient, quiet, long, revering, listening to it; then suggestiveness.

CXIII.

July, 1851.

I wish I did not hate preaching so much, but the degradation of being a Brighton preacher is almost intolerable. 'I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed;' but I think there is not a hard-working artisan whose work does not seem to me a worthier and

higher being than myself. I do not depreciate spiritual work—I hold it higher than secular; all I say and feel is, that by the change of times the pulpit has lost its place. It does only part of that whole which used to be done by it alone. Once it was newspaper, schoolmaster, theological treatise, a stimulant to good works, historical lecture, metaphysics, &c., all in one. Now these are partitioned out to different officers, and the pulpit is no more the pulpit of three centuries back, than the authority of a master of a household is that of Abraham, who was soldier, butcher, sacrificer, shepherd, and emir in one person. Nor am I speaking of the ministerial office; but only the ‘stump orator’ portion of it—and that I cannot but hold to be thoroughly despicable.

I had an hour’s baiting from Mrs. — yesterday, in reference, no doubt, to what the papers have been saying, and to reports of my last sermons. She talked very hotly of the practice of laying all faults at the door of the aristocracy, whereas it was the rich city people, on whom she lavished all her (supposed) aristocratic scorn, who were in fault, because they would live like nobles. Besides, did not the nobles spend their money, and was not that support of the poor? I wasted my time in trying to explain to her that expenditure is not production; that £50,000 a year spent is not £50,000 worth of commodities produced, and adds nothing to the real wealth of the country. I tried to show her that twenty servants are not supported by their master, but by the labourers who raise their corn and make their clothes; and that twenty being taken off the productive classes throws so much more labour upon those classes. Of course such things are necessary; only employment does not create anything. Men engaged in carrying dishes or in making useless roads are employed, no doubt. But this labour does the country no good; and the paying of them for their labour, or the mere giving in charity, may make a fairer distribution of the wealth

there is, but does not go one step towards altering the real burden of the country or producing new wealth. Extravagant expenditure impoverishes the country. This simple fact I could not make her comprehend. Then she got upon political preaching—abused it very heartily—acknowledged that religion had to do with man’s political life, but said a clergyman’s duty is to preach obedience to the powers that be—was rather puzzled when I asked her whether it were legitimate to preach from James v. 1: “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl,” &c.—asked whether it was possible for old women and orphans to understand such subjects; to which I replied, ‘No; and if a clergyman refuse to touch on such subjects, which belong to real actual life, the men will leave his church; and, as is the case in the Church of England, he will only have charity orphans, who are compelled to go, and old women to preach to.’

On Monday I had a long visit from —. He wanted me to preach in Percy Chapel for some schools. I refused. The system of ‘starring’ it through the country is a contemptible one. If there is a feeble light in any man, the glowworm is the type which nature has given for his conduct, to shine or glimmer quietly in his own place, and let the winged insects come to the light if they like. Whereas the fireflies which fly in the West Indies, obtruding themselves about in people’s faces, are caught and put under a watch-glass by the inhabitants, to show them what o’clock it is by night. When they have been used up they are thrown aside, and no one stops to see whether they live or die. The quiet little glowworm is seen only by those that love it. Birds of prey are asleep. What a pretty little fable might be made of this! For men and women it is true. She who will be admired, flashing her full-dressed radiance in the foolish or rather wise world’s face, will be treated like the firefly, used to light up a party or to flirt with, and then, &c., &c.

CXIV.

'A firm belief that at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness. The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman indeed, but lofty, pure and beautiful and wise: moreover, not through dusky grief, but through the ethereal medium of joy, and showing how sacred love should make us happy by the truest test of a love successful to that end.'—*Helps*.

That is to me remarkable, as a coincidence with a favourite thought of mine concerning the origin of Mariolatry, which I have sometimes worked out, and also with an unmistakable tendency in the present day to revive Mariolatry, as if the truth in it were not yet got out.

It coincides, too, with the (sometimes frantic) efforts made for female emancipation, and outcries, especially in America, about their slavery; it coincides, moreover, with a philosophic speculation of M. Comte's upon this subject, who looks for the hope of the future in, not hero-worship, but woman-worship.

I think it would shed a kind of setting light and glory upon the deathbeds of those whose aspirations have been high, and whose work is done in this world, if, as they go out of it, they could see some such hope for the race coming in—as at the dawn of a former salvation, hearts old and worn with hopeless expectation cried, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' A work written by the author quoted above contains some interesting and valuable thoughts on this head—not quixotic. Meanwhile, the hope of a flash of illuminating light, coming suddenly, yet by degrees, like the lightning from the electricity which has gathered through the summer months, slowly, and from a woman's heart, is a very precious thought, and one which so harmonises with my own dim anticipa-

tions, that I mean to let my mind dwell on it much; for it is well to occupy oneself with a noble hope.

Tennyson's 'Vision of Sin,' too mystical for most people, has long been to me the shadowing of an awful truth: and the way in which high feelings subside into the despair of self, or scorn of others, is one of the most terrible facts of our humanity. I have seen how moral wreck and ruin here and hereafter may tremble upon the destiny of a single individual heart, and how, if such a one heart should fall into callousness or sin or recklessness, personal goodness would cease to be a matter of care; nay, dreadful to say, might become loathsome, as implying superiority to that other, and then there would be nothing left but plunge after plunge into degradation and vileness. So it is that feelings in themselves not ungenerous may become the very ministers and railroads which smooth the way for evil. At least, this is the utterance of the deepest thought on and result of what I have seen in life. It is expressed, perhaps, mystically, as it were, afar off, in indefinite and abstract terms, but it is no abstraction or vague dream.

I have caught Mr. — in some impertinent condemnations of me behind my back. I have written to him straight, to ask him 'whether he said it or not. If he has, I will bring the matter to a point, and stop some of these smooth gentlemen, Mr. — and Mr. — included, who are all smiles and friendliness to my face, and treat me like a heretic or an infidel behind my back. I will put a stop to this backstairs clerical gossip and bigotry for a little time.'

I have read no new book, except Leigh Hunt's 'Autobiography.' Leigh Hunt is interesting; he is full of little literary light gossip of Shelley, Byron, Hazlitt, Godwin, &c., and many other names I am familiar with. He has a very charitable and cheerful view of men and life; indeed, too much so for men who do great things, who are made of sterner stuff, and do not take the

rose-water way of making all sweet by making the surface odoriferous and pleasant, while all below is full of misery.

CXV.

MY DEAR —,—Your mamma showed me your questions to her, and I offered to answer them as well as I can, though it would be easier to do so *de vive voix* than on paper. That respecting the personality of the devil I have already answered in a letter to your sister, though I am not sure that it was sufficiently detailed to be quite satisfactory or intelligible. Remember, however, that the main thing is to *believe in God*, which is the chief article of all the creeds. Our salvation does not depend upon our having right notions about the devil, but right feelings about God. And if you hate evil, you are on God's side, whether there be a personal evil principle or not. I myself believe there is, but not so unquestioningly as to be able to say, I think it a matter of clear revelation. The Bible *does* reveal God, and except with a belief in God there will and can be no goodness. But I can conceive intense hatred of wrong with great uncertainty whether there be a devil or not. Indeed many persons who believe in a devil are worse instead of better for their belief, since they throw the responsibility of their acts off themselves on him. Do not torment yourself with such questions. The simpler ones are the deepest.

Next, as to St. James's assertion that 'faith without works profiteth nothing;' which appears to contradict St. Paul's, who says that 'a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.'

Suppose I say, 'A tree cannot be struck without thunder,' that is true, for there is never destructive lightning without thunder. But, again, if I say, 'The tree was struck by lightning without thunder,' that is true too, if I mean that the lightning alone struck it without the thunder striking it. You read the two assertions together, and they seem contradictory. So, in the same way, St. Paul says, 'Faith justifies without

works'—that is, faith *only* is that which justifies us, not works. But St. James says, 'Not a faith which is without works.' There will be works with faith, as there is thunder with lightning; but just as it is not the thunder but the lightning, the lightning without the thunder, that strikes the tree, so it is not the works which justify. Put it in one sentence—*Faith alone justifies: but not the Faith which is alone.* Lightning alone strikes, but not the lightning which is alone without thunder; for that is only summer lightning, and harmless. You will see that there is an ambiguity in the words 'without and alone,' and the two apostles use them in different senses, just as I have used them in the above simile about the lightning.

All this will be more plain if you consider what faith is. It is that strong buoyant confidence in God and in His love which gives energy and spirit to do right without doubt or despondency. Where God sees that, He sees the spring and fountain out of which all good springs: He sees, in short, the very life of Christ begun, and He reckons that to be righteousness; just as a small perennial fountain in Gloucestershire is the Thames, though it is not as yet scarcely large enough to float a schoolboy's boat; and just as you call a small seedling not bigger than a little almond peeping above the ground, an oak: for the word 'justify' means not to be made righteous, but to reckon or account righteous.

Now observe, just as you count the seven springs to be the Thames *without* a flood of waters, and without the navy that rides on the Thames, and just as you call the sapling an oak, without the acorns, so God reckons the trust in Him as righteousness, because it is the fountain and the root of righteousness, being, indeed, the life divine in the soul. He reckons it as such (that is, He justifies the soul that has it) without works—that is, before works are done, and not because of the works. But then that faith will not be

without works; for the fountain *must* flow on, and the tree *must* grow, and the life of God in the soul, sanguine trust in God, the loving and good One, *must* spring up with acts; for to say that it does not would be to say that it is dead, or that it is like summer lightning, or like the gutter, which is running past my house now, after a shower of rain, and which is no perennial spring. St. Paul says, Works—mere acts—are not enough to justify us; because they are limited and imperfect. Ten thousand—a million—cannot, because even a million is a limited number. Nothing can justify but faith, for faith is infinite and immeasurable like a fountain. True, replies St. James. But then do not think that St. Paul means to say that a living fount of faith will be barren, without works. The faith which saves, is not that kind which has no piety, but that kind which is ever prolific—‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’

Tell me if this is plain, and tell me fairly and truly. I have great enjoyment in writing to you and your sisters, and I shall always have great enjoyment in answering all of your questions, or in assisting you in any way I can.

CXVI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I will, in as short a space as I can, give you my notions on this baptismal controversy. I believe the Scripture doctrine to be this:—

Christ revealed the fact that all men are God’s children. He proclaimed a new name of God—the Father; and a new name of man, or Humanity—the Son; a vital union, by a Spirit ever near, ever inward—‘a light lighting every man that cometh into the world.’ The grand distinctive truth contained in this—I say distinctive, because, *in a way*, the Jews had acknowledged God as a Father—was that God was recognised as the Father of all; not Jews only—there had lain the old falsehood—but Gentiles too. This was the Gospel, so peculiarly the

essential truth of the Gospel, that St. Paul calls it ‘the mystery.’ ‘My gospel’ is the thing hidden from ages and generations, viz., that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs. This, then, is the message to the *world*; baptism is that message to the *individual*. You personally, especially, by name, A or B, are hereby informed of that truth—you are God’s child. You are henceforth to live as such—not according to the old falsehood, as a child of the devil, denying God your Father, living with no resemblance to Him; but henceforth redeemed from that into privilege. There is a difference, however, between being God’s child by right, and God’s child in fact. All who are born into the world are God’s children by right. They are not so, in fact, until they recognise it, and believe it, and live as such. To believe it, and live it, is to be regenerate. For instance, had the Dauphin of France been apprenticed to the cobbler Simon till twenty years of age, he was, by right, heir to the kingdom; but, in fact, ignorant of his right, with no royal character, but with base habits. Yet you could say, those were not his proper but his false nature. Now, a revelation made to him, even by a bad man, say by Simon, of the fact, would have altered all, put him in possession of new motives, and, supposing that accession had been possible, put him in possession of the kingdom. You would, rightly, then have said that the letter conveying that intimation, authoritatively, had made him a royal child and heir of the kingdom. Yet made only in a figurative sense—made only as resting on a previous fact. That letter did not create him the first-born of France, but authoritatively revealed him as such. I believe that baptism does the same. I can, with all my heart, use the language of the catechism of the Church, and say, ‘In baptism I was *made* a child of God,’ &c.; just as a sovereign is made king by coronation, but only because he was *de jure*

such before. And the act of a bad man or minister is just as valid as Simon's supposed intimation, because the fact is fact—eternal fact, whether known or not, and quite independent of his character. A heathen is God's child if he only knew it. You send a missionary to him to tell him what he is, and to bid him realise his royal character; but being God's child *de jure* avails him nothing unless he becomes such in fact, that is, changes his life and character, and becomes, like his Father, pure and holy. Then he is regenerate: God's child before unconsciously, God's child now by a second birth consciously. Nay, in fact, till now he was a child of wrath, in which again I entirely take the Church's words, 'by nature a child of wrath.' Yet that is not the proper real state, but the false one, unnatural and contradictory to our nature. I will only quote two or three texts: 'Because ye are sons,' &c. Sons before regeneration. Regenerated, that is, endued with a spirit of sonship because sons. Here is the distinction *de jure* and *de facto*, the latter resting on the former. Again, 'He came unto *His own*,' &c. They were His own, observe, children *de jure*. 'But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to *become* the Sons of God, even as many as believe on His name truly'—His name of Father. Once more, 'the like *figure* whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us.' It saves us *figuratively*, just as coronation makes a king; and therefore I love the language of the baptismal service. Baptism is, therefore, an authoritative symbol of an eternal fact; a truth of eternity realised in time, and brought down to the limits of 'then and there;' then and there made God's child: but it is only the realization of a fact true before baptism, and without baptism: the personal realization of a fact which belongs to all humanity, and was revealed by Christ; in other words, it is redemption applied. I disagree both with the Bishop of Exeter

and Mr. Gorham. The Bishop, whose view is exactly that of the Council of Trent, holds that a miracle takes place in baptism; that one who not even by right is God's child, miraculously becomes such by the utterance of a form of words and the sprinkling of water: the Eternal descends at the spell of a man. This is incantation, not Christianity; and I object to it, because it professes to create a fact instead of witnessing to it and being based upon it; I object to it, because it denies the great fact for which the Redeemer died, that all mankind are, *de jure*, God's sons, and that He bids them become such *de facto*. Mr. Gorham's view is to me still more offensive. The Bishop's, at least, has this advantage: it prevents sectarian narrowness and attempts to decide who are and are not God's children, by the broad inclusion of all the baptized under that name. But Mr. Gorham holds that *sometimes* a special miracle takes place in baptism, and sometimes not; that when it does, it is in consequence of what he calls preventient grace; consequently, he cannot call even all baptized persons God's children, to say nothing of the race. He opens the door to sectarian uncharitableness, judgment of one another, painful attempts to decide who are and who are not the elect, and still more painful uncertainty to each individual whether *he* is presumptuous or not in believing himself God's son. It has all the evils of the Bishop's views and some of its own. A man is left to the uncertain and ever-varying play of his own emotions to judge this awful question: whereas baptism was given as a pledge to rest on. I know that I have a right to claim to be His child, to live as His child, and that if I do not, I am keeping myself out of a heritage which is my own. How do I know it? Because baptism has authoritatively declared it to me. But I cannot be vain, because it is a privilege not created by my feelings, but by eternal fact, and shared by

the sweep who holds out his hat to me at the crossing of a street. He, too, is a child of God, my brother; and it is my shame if I treat him otherwise. God's image is in him, marred, it may be, or nearly invisible, but there. And so it was in the publicans and harlots whom Christ treated as human beings when the 'religious people' of His day were very indignant at the idea. This is a grand and blessed truth taught by baptism, and not only taught but taught authoritatively, since it is not a *conventional* ordinance, but a divine command.

I do not know, my dear Mr. Trench, whether this rapid outline will be very intelligible; but every word I have written is capable of proofs and ramifications of thought which would fill quires, and I will not attempt to dilate. In reply to the question whether I think the Council have decided rightly, I should say I do. I do *not* think Mr. Gorham's view the view of the Church of England; but I think it is not irreconcilable with it, and I should be very sorry to see the Church pledged to any narrow form of thought which would exclude such shades of opinion. I have no doubt that the Bishop's view is more in letter reconcilable with the Church formularies, and I doubt not has been the view held by a large number of her leading divines; but I humbly trust that I would lose everything on earth rather than teach it or believe in it.

I envy you the society of the eagles. I would give anything for leisure to think quietly, and get out of the jar of human life, and the perpetual necessity of talking, which consumes an amount of energy which should be thrown on action that few suspect or dream of. Count yourself happy that your life-calling is to do, and not to chatter. 'Speech is of silver, silence of gold,' says the German proverb; and the talker is to my mind, by necessity, the smallest of human souls. His soul must ever dwindle, dwindle, dwindle, for

he utters great feelings in words instead of acts, and so satiates his need of utterance, the need of all.

XCXVII.

I shall reply at once to some of the questions in your letter. There is really a connection in the passage you refer to, Luke xviii. 8. He had already referred to the apparent slowness with which evil is redressed—nevertheless, 'God will avenge His own elect, though He bear long with them,' that is, seem to delay; still, though this redress will come, when it comes, will they be expecting it? Will not hope and trust in it be worn out? 'Shall the Son of Man, when He cometh, find faith upon the earth?' I do not, therefore, conceive that this passage even touches the question whether the human race will advance or deteriorate, whether religion will be spread universally or be extinct at Christ's coming; but another question altogether, for 'faith' here means not faith generally, but faith with a special reference—a reference to the redress spoken of: not to the Christian religion, but to the Christian tendency to despond when things look dark; and it seems to me that the sentiment is in spirit this—that all those signal interferences which are called in Scripture 'a coming of Christ' (particularly, of course, the final one), take place when all seems lost, when the most sanguine have ceased to hope. In Matthew xxiv. the same thought occurs perpetually. After enumerating the signs of dread, which seem to proclaim that all is over, *then*, He says, 'Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.'

A bleak north wind has been blowing all day, and not improving the aspect in which people and life generally appear. I read a little of a German commentary, and visited some sick people, which is all that is useful done by me to-day. How worthless and meaningless most lives are!

Bright sunshine again. Certainly the contrast between this and Ireland, in respect to light and clear skies, is very

striking. The heavens seem to me, since I came, brilliant, and wake up a feeling almost of surprise nearly every hour.

To-day I read, which seems a strange feeling, after so long a cessation,—German and reviews, the *Westminster Fraser*; in the latter there is an historical article about Hungarian affairs, to be completed; but the present number is too general to be interesting. The *Westminster* is now, I am told, in the hands of Greg, whose talent is very great, and of Newman and that party. It is curious to read in a secular review articles on Immortality, Reason, and Faith, &c.—a striking sign of the times; for Religion must now be the question, so soon as sectarians shall have got rid of one another, like the Kilkenny cats: and, the field being clear, the real and awful questions that concern Humanity shall come to be debated by men emancipated from the fear of church-excommunications, and the shivering shrieks of the sectarians who have so long monopolised to themselves the title of religious.

I have begun Lange's 'Life of Christ'—a masterly, erudite, deep work, written to meet Strauss and other sceptics.

Kossuth's speeches I mean to read; there is an account of them abbreviated in the *Examiner*. *Fraser's* article says that he first rose into notice in 1833, as a reporter of parliamentary debates. His energy in learning English, so as to speak in the masterly way he does, and his independence in refusing all subscriptions made for him personally, tell highly in his favour, and compel interest; but whether he is a hero or not, I think the means of ascertaining—knowing all we can know from newspapers already biassed—are exceedingly slender. The *Examiner* speaks highly of him, and W. S. Landon writes enthusiastically. 'The hardest thing in the world, sir, is to get possession of a fact;' so said Dr. Johnson, and that before mesmerism and homœopathy put in their claims to be fact.

CXVIII.

I am very hard at work in teaching, visiting, and preparation for the pulpit. My reading has been long neglected and irregular. I am trying to get a little zest, and succeeding in it—in the attempt to secure at least regularity.

A paper—one of Chambers's for the People—has just been put into my hands, on 'Industrial Investments and Associations.' The writer looks upon the workmen's associations as hopeless, and dispassionately endeavours to show that they conflict with irresistible laws. Nevertheless, he is desirous that they should be tried fully and fairly, in order that the question may be set at rest. I have not yet read it, but in just glancing over it, I am inclined to like the general tone—that is good in all that Chambers publishes. To-day is sunny, but dim and autumnal, with that peculiar watery shine cast on the yellowed leaves in my garden which makes them look so damp, limp, and autumnal. I have not yet been out of doors.

Mr. — has much more definite and settled views than his brother—a great advantage even when views are inadequate, for it saves from much uncertainty in action, much questioning *à quoi bon*, and much loss of time in speculation. In fact, I am more persuaded than I was, that speculation is, to the speculator himself, at least, an evil, whatever results it may give the world; and convinced—not more than ever, for that would be impossible—that to believe is a stronger thing, a greater source of strength, as well as evidence of it—than to doubt, always, of course, excepting the cases of mesmerism and homœopathy—no, not excepting them, for they are themselves scepticisms, not faiths, shaking trust in what has been received, and which did well enough, and not substituting any certainty in its place.

CXIX.

I spoke to H — about the worship

of the Virgin, and he thought one reason for its prevalence is, that it puts before men the more affectionate side of truth; and he deplored the want of a more large appeal to the affections in Protestantism, saying that we worship Christ, but none of us love Him. I was silent, but the result of a scrutiny into my own mind was that, with an exception, I scarcely love any one, or any thing else, and that not because of any reference to His love for me, which somehow or other never enters into my mind, but solely in consequence of what He is and was, according, at least, to my conception of Him and His mind and heart. I do not know that this consciousness pleased me, because it presented itself rather as a deficiency than as a power—a lack of human sympathy, the existence of a continually increasing number of repellent poles in my constitution, which isolate me from my species, and make my antipathies more marked than my sympathies. Whereas, St. John's conception of genuine love for Him, was that of an affection trained in love for beings who exhibit the same Humanity which was in Him, in weaker images, in the various relationships of life. 'If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' Through the visible as a school we rise up to the appreciation of the invisible. Now my nature forces me to reverse the order, or rather to skip the first steps, for I certainly have some sympathy—dreamy, perhaps useless—with the invisible—invisible personality, justice, right; but there they end, and almost never go on, or go back, to the visible and human. Those lines you have often quoted, of Burns—

I saw thee eye the general weal
With boundless love—

express a feeling which I can only imagine, not realise, except by a sort of analogy which is dreamy.

* * * *

I suppose Kossuth is a man of very un-

common ability, with much that is fine, and a good deal that is human about him, but far higher in the scale of being than the scribes who now, as of old, can believe in nothing greater than themselves—it would be better if they could have a false worship with one generous emotion.

His speeches are wonderfully beautiful. There is a sincerity and fervour in them that cannot be altogether from sham; he must be a hero. That *esprit moquer* of which *The Times* is the type does the heart no good.

* * * *

I send you an extract from a letter about Kossuth, which will interest you. I have been patiently endeavouring to put myself in possession of his history, and to weigh the charges against him. I confess I incline strongly to the conviction that he is a true man, not without faults (who is?), but worthy of honour. After a century or two, liberators and heroes are received as demi-gods, and numbers who affect to pronounce the names of Tell, or Wallace, or Kosciusko with enthusiasm, sneer at Kossuth. Doubtless, in the worship of him there is a vast deal that is very ignorant. The mob throw up their caps, just as Shakspeare has so wonderfully described in 'Coriolanus,' because others shout. But by the mob I do not mean the working classes; they have read the whole subject of the Hungarian war long before this, and have a definite opinion upon the matter; but I mean the mob of the upper classes, who shout because others shout, and fancy themselves crazy with sublime enthusiasm, when they really know nothing of Kossuth, and are staggered when a contrary opinion is given. And I mean, on the other hand, the mob who follow *The Times* newspaper. I shall write seriously* to a friend of mine, who tells me that she is wild about Kossuth; and that, in reply to some rhapsodies of hers, her uncle has written her a letter of ridicule. Now, this is really dangerous. Enthusiasm being in fashion,

* *Vide* letter cxxi.

she writes off noble sentiments about liberty, &c., and a hue and cry against Kossuth would still it all. This is not the enthusiasm nor the affection which will bide shocks; besides, it is a most dangerous habit to character, to be able to cook up raptures whenever raptures are the rage. How is a woman ever to know what she feels or what she thinks?

CXX.

You shall have in a day or two a copy of the *Record*, containing an article in which I am attacked. I find it is only one out of several which I had never heard of until yesterday. They are beginning to think me of sufficient importance to be put down, and have discovered my fellow-conspirators in Archdeacon Hare, Maurice, and Donaldson, one of the first classical scholars in England, and Tennyson. Pretty good society; and, to borrow an expression of poor Shelley, 'I would rather be damned with such men than saved with the *Record*,' at least, if the penalty of such a questionable salvation was being compelled to pollute my soul with lies and slander twice a week. But how very short-sighted to fly their blind buzzard at such small game as myself. Do they not see they bring my ministry into notice or notoriety, and give to it a prominence that it might never have gained by itself? It is like Mr. Kennaway preaching against the 'Vestiges of Creation,' and Falthorp's shop being besieged in consequence with purchasers of the book. Ridiculous and contemptible as the hostility of such a paper as the *Record* is, it chafes me, and deepens the feeling of defiant isolation, which is so undesirable.

CXXI.

MY DEAR —,—Thanks, many, for your letter. Do not write any more rhapsodies to your uncle about Kossuth. No enthusiasm will last long that is not deeply based—a few sarcastic sneers will shake it; for if it comes from following the enthusiasm of others, it will go with the coldness of

others. As to Kossuth, the truth is we know very little about him; and it is very hard to get at facts. He is a man of unquestionable genius—unquestionably to a great extent sincere; but how far he has been a selfish man, or an ambitious man, or a rash, instead of a wise man, neither you nor I can determine, as the authentic history of the Hungarian struggle is not before us. Many of his own countrymen, equally zealous with himself for the liberty of Hungary, condemn him strongly; and I do not see how we can decide by mere feeling between them. I confess that I am not satisfied with the 'all things to all men,' which he has made his policy in his replies to Americans, French Red Republicans, people of Marseilles, and English constitutionalists. I suspend my judgment because I can see a possibility of explanation; nevertheless, I am dissatisfied, and so I see is the *Examiner* of last week—a staunch friend of the Hungarian cause. We shall see what ground he takes in America. I sent an interesting account of him to your mother, from an eyewitness; but I acknowledge I put little trust in speechifying; there was one—only one trait which looks like clap-trap in that letter, where he said, 'Do you applaud that? To me it seems so natural not to be ambitious.' I rejoice in the enthusiasm of the working men for him, for with them it is not a passion of three or four weeks' standing, but the result of a long-sustained interest in the Hungarian war, the details of which they read greedily while it was going on, and for which they subscribed their money. They may be wrong or right in the choice of a hero, but the enthusiasm which takes them out of themselves, and has cost them something, must do them good. I have been reading attentively such documents as I can procure respecting the Hungarian struggle and Kossuth's life. I am inclined on the whole to defend him, though by no means immaculate, and on the whole to admire him; but the less I am disposed to follow in the wake of *The*

Times, with its hue and cry against him, the less also do I feel inclined to follow in the wake of the mob, who cook up a nine-days' fever about him.

I do feel deep enthusiasm about Sir Charles Napier, because I have thoroughly studied his campaigns, know his motives, know how much he has sacrificed to principle, given up pensions, &c. ; and at the same time see all his faults, after a due and fair balance of all which I conclude he is a right noble man ; and all the sneers in the world could not shake this, nor the condemnation of the East India Company, nor the neglect of Government, nor even his own eccentricities and vehemence.

In reply to your question, 'Will Kossuth stir up England to support Hungary?' I reply, with all my heart, I hope not. If once the false principle of interference by one nation in another's quarrels were admitted in Europe, why should not France aid our socialists, or America aid the miserable Irish against their landlords? Each country must free itself within itself, and the freedom which comes from foreign intervention never can be real, because it cannot fit the people to use its freedom. One nation may aid another when oppressed by another ; but the Hungarian question is one of their own internal constitution and internal relations to the government. England may mediate and advise, if Austria will accept her advice ; but if ever she interferes with Hungary, I think she will be guilty of a grave crime—the very same crime into which France fell when she tried, by her propagandism, to revolutionize other nations, and which England so justly resented ; which, too, neutralised the French Revolution, turned its glory into shame, and ended in a final failure.

CXXII.

Your questions about Eternity and a Future State puzzle me. Time is but (to us) the succession of ideas, long or short, as they are few or many ; and eternity,

as we use the word, means nothing more than the endlessness of this succession. The distinction made by religious people between Eternity and Time, is an unthinking one. Eternity seems to me a word expressive of a negation ; it does but deny a termination to that mental state which we call time, for time is a subjective thing ; existing that is, in us, not externally to us—a mode of our being. Do you remember that little book, 'The Stars and the Earth?' It made very comprehensible how time is merely dependent upon our limitations, and how to an unlimited being there must be no time—how, in short, the annihilation of the sense of space would be the annihilation of the idea of time. As to what our being in a future state shall be, what its enjoyments, or whether the affections here shall be those there, and whether they shall be, as here, mutable or progressive, I confess myself utterly without a clue to decide. To my mind and heart, the most satisfactory things that have been ever said on the future state are contained in the 'In Memoriam.' By the bye, *The Times* has attacked the Poem ; allowed it much merit, but criticised severely. Part of the criticism is just, and part miserably small. The use of such antiquated words as 'Burgeon,' 'Gnarr,' may be objectionable. Be it so. Well, two words in a poem are not quite fatal to a claim of genius. The charge of irreverence is utterly false—

And dear as sacramental wine*
To dying lips, is all he said—

that is on things divine.

The reviewer is very severe on this. But does human friendship convey no grace of God to the soul? Do holiest remembrances of God's saintliest reveal nothing of God? If they do, how exquisite here the word 'sacramental' is, as applied to them. Oh, most foolish Thunderer! Then

* The lines have been altered and not improved :

'And dear to me as sacred wine,' &c.—Ed.

he is very merry about the shadow waiting for the keys 'to cloke me from my proper scorn,' talks of Hobbs and locks unpickable. Blind beetle! the shadow, death, has been identified in a previous page; the reader is in possession of the metaphor. Tennyson prays that he may be hidden in this shadow from his own scorn before he—'forgets,' I think, for I have not the passage before me. The reviewer objects to the word 'cloke,' because shadows do not cloke. Nor does light clothe; but if the poor man had read 'robed in light,' he would have thought it quite correct, because it is a common expression. Another—

That each who seems a separate whole
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall,
Remerging in the general soul.

'Of the two mysteries, the shadow with the cloke is probably the easier,' so says the reviewer, who, in this, as well as other places, evidently copies almost whole sentences from Macaulay's castigation of Robert Montgomery; but this critic is not a Macaulay. Now to the passage. The subject is the possibility of the loss of personal consciousness in the hereafter, and of being resolved into the consciousness of the universe. Possibly the unhappy wight did not know that this is a theory largely held by foreign metaphysicians. It is quite clear that he never read the deep, wondrous Hindoo mythology, at the very root of which this conception lies. The 'skirts of self' are simply the outskirts of individuality—that which marks off the conscious Entity from the All—an expression which requires thought, no doubt; but, then, the theory which he is opposing is not quite as easy as the articles of the daily newspapers, with which this gentleman is familiar; and I do not see why Mr. Tennyson is to be expected to make the statement of it intelligible at first reading to a penny-a-liner. Then comes the criticism about the whole being exaggerated, and ex-

pressed sometimes in terms of amatory fondness. Exaggeration is, of course, to be tried by the affections of a paid *littérateur* or politician!

A statist art thou, in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred
First learn to love one living man,
Then mayst thou think upon the dead.

Of course it is exaggerated love to those who feel feebly. Then, as to the amatory tenderness: this, too, is ignorance of human nature; the friendship of a school-boy is as full of tenderness, and jealousy, and passionateness, as even love itself. I remember my own affection for G. R. M. How my heart beat at seeing him; how the consciousness of his listening while I was at reading or translating annihilated the presence of the master; how I fought for him; how, to rescue him at prisoners' base, turned the effect of mere play into a ferocious determination, as if the captivity were real; how my blood crept cold with delight when he came to rescue me, or when he praised me. And this miserable quill-driver, in the very spirit of flunkeyism, calls this poem exaggerated, because all the poetry of the affections is made ludicrous by remembering that this Amaryllis was a barrister at the Chancery bar. If the Chancery bar, or any other accident of a man's environment, destroys the real poetry of life, then the human soul has no worth but that which comes from its trappings—an idea which I reckon about the most decisive proof of a vulgar soul which can be found. As to the tenderness, too, he is obliged to include Shakspeare in the accusation. Now, it may be a very presumptuous thing to say, but it is just conceivable that Shakspeare knew as much about what is human and true, and what is the true mode of expressing it in words, as this writer.

CXXIII.

That is a striking passage which you quote, about the Jews having believed and

swindled since the days of Jacob. It shows how separable devotedness may be from morality; there being religious men who are immoral, and moral men who are unreligious, the former chiefly amongst southern temperaments, the latter amongst the northerns.

That, too, about Socrates: I am certain that most Englishmen would have hemlocked him, just as the Jews built the sepulchres of the old prophets, and in the spirit of their fathers stoned the prophets and crucified the Prophet of their own day: thus allowing the deeds of their fathers.

I read Hartley Coleridge's life with pain and instruction. Something wrong in the blood, both father and son wanting will. 'Coleridge,' said some one of the father, 'is a good man—a very good man; but, somehow, as soon as a duty presents itself in a practical way, he cannot do it.'

On the subject of binding and loosing, I do not know how I can explain it better; but remember 'loosing from sin' implies making a severance between it and the soul; 'binding it,' means identifying it with the character. You seem to look upon it as only relating to a forgiveness which is irrespective of character, and so the forgiveness of man is no doubt an un-

certain pledge of God's forgiveness. Now I show a *fact*: that man does actually bind and loose—does fix sin upon the character—does by his treatment take the burden off and free from it henceforth. No one can deny that fact. It may be very dreadful, or very glorious, but here it is, and we cannot divest ourselves of our power, we can use it or abuse it. We may, representatively, show mercy when we ought to show God's wrath, and *vice versa*, but effects follow whether we will or not. Of course there are counteracting circumstances mercifully interposed; otherwise, the unjust judgments of men, singly and collectively, would be in every case final, which would be hideous indeed. A man unjustly condemned and shunned may be wise and strong enough not to accept it in any sense as mirroring God's award; but to a weak and ill-informed conscience, even when innocent, it does so far represent it as to make him an outcast, and at last degraded. 'Give a dog an ill name,' &c. Much more, then, does it carry this power when the guilt is real. The Church, which is Christian society, and every Christian individual, are to perceive this power instead of disclaiming it, and to use it for God, and truly, instead of untruly.

CHAPTER X.

1852.

Feelings and Interests of Mr. Robertson in January 1852—His Pleasure in Ornithology—His resolute Work—Character of his Sermons—His Humility, Gentleness—His proud Sternness and Indignation—Two Anecdotes in Illustration—His Efforts in behalf of the Mechanics' Institute—The Two Lectures on the 'Influence of Poetry on the Working Classes'—Their Results upon the Working Men—Letters of Mr. Drummond and Lord Carlisle upon the Lectures and the Replies—Criticism by the 'South Church Union'—Reply on the Points, 'that Severance from all Parties and Maxims is a *First Principle* in seeking after Truth'; that 'Poetry is always most cultivated in Effeminate Ages'—Visit to Cheltenham—Sermons preached at Lewes Assizes—Address presented by the Young Men of his Congregation—His Speech on the Occasion—His Confirmation Class—The Elections at Brighton in 1852—Proposition to open the Crystal Palace on Sunday—Sermon and Letters on the Subject—Orthodox Attacks—Close of the Year.

Letters from January 24, 1852, to December 1852.

THE only record of Mr. Robertson's life and pursuits during the first month of this year, is the following letter to a friend in S. America:—

60, Montpelier Road, Brighton,
January, 1852.

. . . What shall I say of your bitter loss? There is nothing to be said. God is Love. All is well and all is right. These are the old, simple, primary truths; but time alone can teach you and me *how* true. Do you know Tennyson's 'In Memoriam'? It is the most precious work published this century—written in memory of his friend Arthur Hallam, and exhibiting the manifold phases through which the spirit passes, of rebellion, darkness, doubt, through the awful questions about personal identity hereafter, reunion, and the uncertainty whether Love be indeed the law of the universe, on to placid trust, even cheerfulness, and the deep conviction—all is well. Tell me if you have it or have seen it. To me it has been the richest treasure I have had. For, except in this conviction, the first and simplest, on which we have ever to fall back from more artificial and complicated theories—God is, and God is Love, I can see nothing in this life but a hideous, waste, howling wilderness, with siroccos and sand-pillars, overwhelming everything, and scorching up everything. . . .

All things go on here as usual. I have been doing all I can for the working classes, in whom I take much interest. . . .

I wonder whether you could do anything for me in assisting a study I have taken up after long disuse—that of ornithology? If you could get any one to shoot and make a collection of the Demerara birds, skinning them and filling the skin with tow or cotton, and preserving them from insects by the best means at hand, arsenical soap, corrosive sublimate, camphor or corn pepper, and packing them up carefully and dry, in tow or any such substance, it would be a great prize to me. Demerara has some beautiful birds, and some very important ones. Even the common birds would be uncommon here. Skill is required in skinning them, and care. No doubt there is some one more or less expert at this in your neighbourhood. Charge me with all

expenses. A trifling remuneration would induce some amateur sportsman to collect the rare birds, and the common ones are easily got. Hawks, owls, ducks, among others, would be welcome, not *stuffed*, only skinned and filled lightly with cotton, &c., the brains, and so on, being removed.

. . . Farewell, may God bless you, comfort and strengthen you.

Affectionately and ever yours,

FRED. W. ROBERTSON.

It is interesting to mark in this letter the re-awakening of his early interest in ornithology. He had received this fresh impulse from the case of stuffed birds, which Mr. Hancock, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, had sent to the Exhibition of 1851.

Mr. Hancock (he writes in March '52) tells me that his engravings of the falcons are nearly ready for publication. I have urged him to preface them with a treatise on the art of taxidermy. If I were a man of wealth, I would as readily give him 150*l.* for his case, as I would give 4000*l.* for a Raffaele, and rather; for his works stand alone, with nothing second to or like them.

During the brief seasons of recreation which Mr. Robertson took, he pursued, while shooting, the study of the natural history of birds. One of his letters is full of his joy at finding a rare heron, and of the anxiety which he spent on stuffing it. A friend of his, who was much with him in his expeditions, said that every bird which crossed the path furnished him materials for conversation. He pictured in the happiest manner his habits, nests, eggs, and migrations. It was impossible to help catching the enthusiasm with which he spoke of his boyish adventures in the woods. He would have loved well the adventurous career of a wandering naturalist. Wilson's

wild existence among the American forests haunted him like a dream of pleasure. It is impossible not to feel more and more, as his letters unfold his character, how intolerable the cabined and monotonous life in a fashionable town, with its over-civilised race of dull pleasure-hunters, must have been to such a spirit. Yet, chafing inly at every step, he bound himself by resolute will to do his duty to the last. Self-repression—self-sacrifice—these were not mere names to him. He never relaxed his effort. Though at times a complaint of his loneliness is, as it were, dragged out of him, the complaint did not shadow behind it idleness as its cause. No pain, mental or bodily, caused him to omit the smallest portion of his work. He says, in a sermon preached the first Sunday of 1852, and it was the expression of his inmost feeling: 'The motto on every Christian banner is—Forward; there is no resting in the present, no satisfaction in the past.' And his sermons in this year seem to have become more sorrowful in tone, and especially more earnest. They read like those of a man who felt that death was near. They are startling sometimes for their bold exposition of views distasteful to what is called the 'Orthodox party.' The opposition and impertinence he suffered from seem to have had the effect of driving him into stating, in broad and sometimes in harsh lines, his convictions. His manner became more repellent, even proud. Proud as he was, his humility was also great. Quite unaffected, it touched those who did not mistake the self-dependence of the man for self-conceit, with a sense of strange beauty, so much of the air of childhood seemed to float about it, so much receptiveness, willingness to

listen, self-forgetfulness. But, when attacked unjustly, wilfully misrepresented, this very humility made his indignation greater. He strove to be gentle to all men; but, to his deep regret afterwards, the haughty soldier-spirit broke out sometimes. When the injury he resented was a personal one, he apologised frankly for his anger, if it had transgressed the bounds of Christian indignation; but when he was indignant with falsehood, injustice, or cowardly wrong done to another, it was terrible to see his whole face knit itself together with wrath; his mouth, generally soft with feeling and flexible with change, and habitually sad, grow to a fine line of concentrated force. The words he then used were startling from their power. He was never violent, never 'in a passion' when he spoke, but each word fell like a sledge-hammer upon its point and on its victim. I have been told that once, when he found it necessary to denounce a man for a dastardly and wilful crime, that his words had all the awfulness of a judicial sentence; that the hardened sinner writhed under them as if under a whip. To this, I think, he alludes in a letter, when he says, 'Once in my life I felt a terrible might. I knew, and rejoiced to know as I spoke, that I was inflicting the sentence of a coward and a liar's hell.' For his was not that maudlin Christianity which dwells on the tenderness, and never on the indignation of Christ, which remembers only 'I am come to seek and save that which was lost,' and forgets, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.' This sternness was often shown unexpectedly. Slight acts, passing scenes, in which other men saw only folly; a word, a glance, a gesture, which others saw nothing in,

he shuddered at, and spoke of indignantly. For he felt the base spirit which prompted the apparently trifling act and expression ; he looked on them by the light of a pure heart, and by the experience of past history, and saw them in themselves and in their effects as Sin.

Two anecdotes sufficiently show, the first how proudly, and the second with what almost awful boldness, he could speak. They will also account for much of the virulence with which he was assailed. A man who answered his opponents so, could scarcely expect to be gently treated in return. One Monday morning an elderly gentleman introduced himself as having been of great service to young clergymen. He arraigned the sermon he had heard in Trinity Chapel the day before ; spoke of dangerous views and the impetuosity of young men ; offered himself as a weekly monitor, and enumerated in conclusion the perils and inconveniences to which popular preachers were subject. Mr. Robertson, who had remained silent, at last rose. 'Really, sir,' he said sternly, 'the only inconvenience I have experienced in being what you are pleased to call me, a popular preacher, is intrusion like the present ;' and he bowed his censor out of the room.

Another day, a lady, with whom he was slightly acquainted, assailed him for 'heterodox opinions,' and menaced him with the consequence which, in this world and the next, would follow on the course of action he was pursuing. His only answer was, 'I don't care.' 'Do you know what don't care came to, sir ?' 'Yes, madam,' was the grave reply, 'He was crucified on Calvary.'

The Working Men's Society, which, in the earlier months of 1851, had

been re-formed under his auspices, was necessarily weakened by its schism, and was now struggling for existence. He was incessant in his endeavours to consolidate it. In November 1851, he says, 'I have been at working men's meetings and lectures every evening.' It was suggested to him that an address on some subject of general interest would materially assist the institution. To the formal request made by the secretary, he returned the following answer :—

In reply to your communication of the 21st, which I only had last night, after an absence from Brighton, I beg to say that after much consideration I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty not to refuse the request made to me.

I am very unfit at present for the excitement of addressing numbers ; but knowing that the insufficiency will be pardoned, and feeling deep interest in the success of the working men, I shall not allow this to stand in the way.

I was not aware that the name of the Institution was to be changed. Is not this virtually acknowledging that the former attempt was a failure, instead of the society being, as I believe it is, the old one purified by experience ? Not knowing the reasons for the change, which perhaps are valid, at first sight I am inclined to regret it. There is much in names, especially when they are associated with recollections which can be appealed to, and when they adhere to a society through many shocks and changes. Besides, 'Working Man' is a noble title for any human being : a human being's right title. 'Mechanic' is a poor class title, like Agriculturist, Botanist, Sailor, &c., &c. Besides, it is not true as a designation for your society ; a schoolmaster is not a mechanic, nor a retail dealer of any kind, yet many such are in the society. Ought you not, like good soldiers in a great cause, to stand to your colours ?

In pursuance of this promise, the two published lectures on 'The Influence of Poetry on the Working Classes,' were given in February, 1852. They were delivered extempore, and before an audience of more than a thousand in number. The wonderful fluency, wedded to impassioned feeling, which made them so telling in delivery, did not imperil their effect when printed, for they were as full of concentrated thought as if he had elaborately written them. He himself considered that some of his statements were too concise.

The lectures, however, are not the less, but the more valuable, from their conciseness of thought. Too well known to describe, they have some autobiographical interest. Scattered through them are anecdotes of his earlier life and feeling, and short sentences such as these: 'The poetic temperament is one of singular irritability of brain and nerve;' 'There are three things in this world which deserve no quarter—Hypocrisy, Pharisaism, and Tyranny;'—sentences which reveal the man in his constitution and his hatreds. Throughout them his rapturous delight in a military career breaks out. Nowhere is he so eloquent as in describing the glorious death of the heroes of Trukkee, the gathering of the bravest in battle round the torn colours which symbolised courage and honour, and the chivalry of war, in contrast with a selfish and ignoble peace. The closing sentence, spoken in anticipation of a French invasion, is full of his own spirit. Often, with most unclerical emphasis, did he express his wish to die, sword in hand, against a French invader.

Thus much I will dare to say. If a foreign root be planted on our sacred soil

—if the ring of the rifle of the Chasseurs de Vincennes be heard upon these shores, terrible as the first reverses might be, when discipline could be met only by raw enthusiasm—thanks to gentlemen who have taught us the sublime mysteries of capital in lieu of the old English superstitions of Honour and Religion, they may yet chance to learn that British chivalry did not breathe her last at Moodkee, or Ferozeshah, or Sobraon, or Goojerat, or Meeanee, or Hyderabad. They may yet be taught that there is something beyond the raw hysterics of a transient excitement in the spirit of self-sacrifice which we have learned from our Master's Cross. They may yet discover that amongst the artisans, and peasants, and working men of England, there are a thousand thousand worthy to be brothers of those heroic eleven who sleep beneath the rocks of Trukkee, with the red thread of Honour round their wrists.

These addresses were not without result. The working men of Brighton, for the first time being told that Poetry did not belong to one class alone, but to all who felt within them the common passions of Humanity, at once assumed their right. The works of many of the poets were added to their library. Their power of appreciating the highest poetry was believed in, and then they believed in it themselves. They became conscious of their powers. From the life of Christ Mr. Robertson had learned this great principle of education: to make men recognize their own spiritual capabilities by throwing himself in trust upon those capabilities. In these lectures he carried that principle into secular things. And the men *were* roused. They read the poets eagerly; sharp discussions arose among them on the comparative merits of Pope, and Walter Scott, and Tennyson. One part of the lecturer's aim was thus attained.

The men employed in a dull mechanic round, or in coarse hand-labour, were led into a refined and pure region both of intellect and feeling. They desired to find and to feel the beautiful. It was a step in their elevation.

A more tangible result of the lectures was, that they brought in sufficient money to make the fortune of the Institute. They were at once published from the corrected notes of the reporter. Two letters which their author received are worth publishing, for the remark and reply which were elicited from him.

The first was from Mr. Henry Drummond :—

DEAR SIR,—I have received your essay with many thanks. It appears to me that you are the only person who is grappling with the natural infidelity of minds educated in everything except religion. . . .

On sending this letter to a friend, Mr. Robertson wrote :—

Mr. Drummond's letter is interesting, inasmuch as it exhibits a deeper perception of what I was aiming at than I have yet seen in any one. To produce a belief in the reality of invisible Truth and Beauty is the chief end of my insignificant work here.

The second was from Lord Carlisle : *—

I would not thank you for your most acceptable present, till I had enjoyed the pleasure of making myself acquainted with its contents. I have recognised in them all the high ability and the generous and delicate feeling which I could have expected.

Upon one or two points of mere taste we may not wholly agree, but there is no

* These letters have been already published in the preface to 'Lectures and Addresses of the late F. W. Robertson.'

part of what you inculcate with which I agree more fully than that in which you commend universality of taste. I have some doubts, for instance, about this—'The best poetry demands study as severe as mathematics require.'

I take what appears to me to be the highest of human compositions—the 'Iliad' and 'Macbeth'—and I think they are both eminently intelligible without pain or effort. Perhaps I would give up 'Hamlet' to you, not 'Othello.'

I think you rate Dr. Johnson's poetical powers too low.

Rest undisturbed within thy peaceful shrine,
Till angels wake thee with a note like thine.

I must not, however, indulge in mere prattle. Let me repay your kindness in the same coin, of however inferior value. I assure you, with all truth, that I look on some things I have said with more complacency, when I flatter myself that there is some identity of view between us.

Lord Carlisle sent with his letter a copy of his 'Lectures on Pope,' and Mr. Robertson replied :—

I will not allow a post to pass without thanking you for your kind present and kinder note, the approval of which I feel to be very invigorating. I was very glad to find that there was not a syllable of the 'Lecture on Pope' which jarred with my estimate of him, which I a little feared. But the passage quoted from Warton, p. 10, and another of your own, p. 16, 'Twas not so much the pomp and prodigality of heaven,' &c., express, though with far more precision, exactly the reasons which I briefly alleged for ranking Pope in the second order, but, in that order, first. I congratulated myself much on perceiving so far this agreement, and in all the admiration which the lecture contains I heartily concur.

The passage, p. 105. 'Heaven was made for those who had failed in this world,'

struck me very forcibly several years ago, when I read it in a newspaper, and became a rich vein of thought in which I often quarried; especially when the sentence was interpreted by the Cross, which was failure, apparently.

My sentence, 'The best poetry demands study as severe as mathematics require,' is very justly open to criticism; but more, I think, from the unfinished abruptness of the phraseology than from its real meaning. The best poetry has a sense which is level to the apprehension at once; not being obscure in expression, nor metaphysical or scholastic in thought; but then any one who had caught this meaning at the first glance would be greatly mistaken if he supposed that he had got all, or nearly all, it meant.

The dew-drop that glitters on the end of every leaf after a shower, is beautiful even to a child; but I suppose that to a Herschel, who knows that the lightning itself sleeps within it, and understands and feels all its mysterious connections with earth and sky, and planets, it is suggestive of a far deeper beauty; and the very instances you allege, 'Macbeth' and the 'Iliad,' would substantiate what I *meant*, though not what I awkwardly perhaps seemed to say. 'Macbeth,' all action, swift and hurried in its progress towards *dénouement*, is intelligible at once. But I spent myself many weeks upon it, and only at last began to feel that it was simple, *because* deep. Some exquisite and fine remarks of Mrs. Jameson on certain characters in it, and profounder ones of Coleridge on others, have brought out a meaning that we feel at once was *in it*, and not forced *upon it*. In the sense I meant, I should say 'Macbeth' could not be understood, especially as a whole, except with hard study.

I am very much tempted to accept the challenge of page 28, in the 'Lecture on Pope,'—'I would beg any of the detractors of Pope to furnish me with another couple of lines from any author whatever, which encloses so much sublimity of meaning

within such compressed limits and such precise terms.'

If it were not that the cartel is addressed only to Pope's *detractors*, I think I should allege that wonderful couplet of the Erd Geist in 'Faust':—

So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der
Zeit,
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid;

at least, if I might interpret them by Psalm cii. 26, 27.

In the graceful courtesy with which your lordship acknowledges that there is 'some identity of view between us,' I receive the best and most cheering reward that my little pamphlet has obtained.

The criticism he received was not, however, altogether friendly. He was not left without the benefit of a little honest hostility. The *South Church Union*,—the organ of the High Church party at Brighton—gave him the benefit of its opposition. The points it attacked appear from the following letter:

I send you the *South Church Union*, containing a Tractarian review of my lectures on poetry, much fairer than an Evangelical would have written, and on the whole as discriminating as could be expected from the essential difference between his position and mine: only, as was naturally to be expected, mine is only half understood and caricatured, though not intentionally. For instance, he falls foul of my 'first principle,' 'sever yourself from all parties and maxims.' Now there is a double ambiguity which belongs to such a rule. It may be a merely negative one; in which case it is only latitudinarianism, being equivalent to 'it does not matter what you think, provided you are not bigoted to one opinion above another.' And this is the way in which he has chosen to understand it; but in the way I said it, it became a positive rule, as indeed the context showed, 'Servant only to the truth;' in other words,

'Surrender yourself to no maxims, because you must be servant to something much higher, namely, truth.' Doubtless the way of attaining truth is not indicated in that sentence, nor could it be; it is a second lesson—I was giving one at a time. The way of reaching truth is by obeying the truth you know. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know,' &c., but it was not my business to introduce that, in that connection. There is another ambiguity in an expression of which the reviewer has not failed to take the false alternative: I called it a 'first principle.' Now 'first' may refer to time, or it may refer to importance. In reference to time the statement would be false, and in this sense in one part of his remarks he has understood it; but in reference to importance it is perfectly true.

To illustrate this: I put a loaded gun in the corner of a room, and tell my child not to touch it. There is a rule or maxim. Knowing nothing of the reason of my command, his plain duty as a child is implicit servile obedience to my order; his conscience should be grieved if, even to prevent its being broken by a fall, he is induced to touch it, because there is a harm in doing it which is to him mysterious and unknown. But suppose him older, and suppose him to understand, by natural intelligence, that the reason of my prohibition was to prevent the possibility of its exploding, and suppose him to see a sheet of paper fall from the table on fire close to it, what would his duty be—to cleave to the maxim, or to cut himself adrift from it? Surely, to snatch up the forbidden gun directly. His first duty, in point of time, is to obey the rule; his first in point of importance, is to break it. Indeed, this is the very essence, according to St. Paul, of the difference between the legal and the gospel state. In the legal state we are under tutors, governors, and must not go beyond rules; for rules are disciplining us to understand the principles of themselves. But in the gospel state we are redeemed from this bondage, serving in

newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. We discern *principles*, and are loyal to them; we use rules or dispense with them, as they save or destroy the principle for which they exist. We are free from the law, that is, we are free from slavish obedience to the maxims; and this, not because we are in a latitudinarian way free from the principles, but exactly because we have become devoted to them in true allegiance. And so far as a man is not devoted to them he is not free from the law, but still under it, that is, he must still be restrained by maxims, for he is not fit to be trusted with the guardianship of principles. A boy who had clearly understood his father's motive about the gun, but had a secret inclination to hear it go off, would be just as unfit to dispense with the strict letter, even in the case of danger from fire, as if he was profoundly ignorant of the cause of the law's enactment.

And so in art and religion. First, in point of time, submit to rules; but first in point of importance—the grand aim indeed of all rules—rise through them to the spirit and meaning of them. Write that upon the heart and be free: then you can use the maxim, not like a pedant, but like an artist; not like a Pharisee, but like a Christian.

The reviewer has made, in his zeal, another singularly wild statement, that poetry is always cultivated chiefly in those ages in which effeminacy prevails. He quotes Plato's 'Republic' in profound ignorance of Plato's meaning, and infers that poetry vitiates.

Now it is an odd thing for a Tractarian to do this. What was the glorious symbolism of the Middle Ages, their majestic architecture, but poetry—were those effeminate ages? Does *he* at all events count the age of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Fra Angelico, a feeble irreligious age? Among the Greeks, Homer, Sophocles, Æschylus, stood foremost; classical scholars do not generally select their age as the one particularly remarkable for effeminacy. Dante

was something of a man, and the Italian republics were in their glory in his day. Goethe, Schiller, may be very heterodox; but the age which witnessed the wars with France was not a soft one. Chaucer, Shakspeare, Spenser, Milton, poor, feeble, degenerate men! and in what an age of Sybarites they were nursed to voluptuous lullabies!

The good gentleman ought to have recollected that a Coryphæus of his party has ascribed a somewhat nobler office to the poet than that of enfeebling the soul. Do you remember that fine passage in the 'Christian Year,'

Sovereign masters of all arts,
Know ye who hath set your parts?

While writing, an idea struck me that it would be almost worth while to send the substance of what I have said here as a reply; for some principles are involved and no personalities.

Almost immediately after the delivery of these lectures he revisited Cheltenham.

Cheltenham, February 24, 1852.

It is nearly three years (he says) since I was here, and how much is altered!—most of my once large acquaintance are gone: only a few friends remain, but they have all met me warmly. I feel myself far more changed within. How beautiful this country is, though there is yet no foliage! I was never so struck with the beauty of the surrounding hills as to-day. I saw all the old spots on hill and valley, with innumerable stories of past days annexed to them.

I was at Christ Church, my old place, this morning, and felt old associations come over me, as if four and a half years had not rolled between; but the changes in the congregation told the truth. Many of the places were empty—some who had filled them gone, many dead; children came up to me as young men and young women, saying, 'Don't you remember me?' and there was a visible increase in wrinkles

and grey hairs. The music nearly overpowered me, for the old hymns and tunes, and the tones of the organ, went home. . . .

This afternoon, instead of going to church, I walked into the country across the fields, and through some of the pretty neighbouring villages, with my brother. The day was fresh but fine, and the Cotswold Hills, which surround Cheltenham, exhibiting a great variety of outline, and rich in woods, were in extreme beauty from the colouring. Among these hills are some of the loveliest valleys I know anywhere. The building, too, of Cheltenham is far better in style than that of Brighton—greatly varied, and almost all the detached villas in good taste, some Italian, others Elizabethan; but there is an air of lightness and grace about it which is quite different from cockneyism. This is much assisted by the abundance of trees with which the town is filled; many of the streets like boulevards; one long walk of ancient elms, a noble avenue.

During this second visit, the revival of old associations, and the inevitable comparison of the past with the present, brought with them only unmingled pain. I have thrown together below the most interesting passages referring to his stay at Cheltenham.

March 8.

I had a walk with Struan and Mr. Munro. The day was lovely in the extreme. We went over the hills, one of my favourite walks. The more I see of this place and the environs, the more I am struck with its beauty, as if I had never seen it before; yet in all probability part of the beauty of scenery depends upon your knowing all the points far and near, so that imagination assists the eye very much, and you supply what you know to what you see, fancying all the time that you see it. Ruskin, I recollect, has some good remarks on this. In our walk we came to a pretty village churchyard, Leck-

hampton, about a couple of miles from hence.* I went in to get the solemn thoughts that are sure to come. There is a tomb erected to Major Macready, brother of the actor. He died in Cheltenham in 1848. It was surrounded with beautiful iron rails, and a trellis-work of iron extending above them. Around it and in it is a garden border, full of most rare and carefully tended plants: roses, which bloomed nowhere else, were blooming there. . . .

Yesterday I rode out with Struan, Mr. Munro, and his niece, over some lovely country. We passed the scenes of many desperate leaps over walls and gates, taken by my brother and myself years ago. Munro said, 'Why, Robertson, the farmers would not know you again, you ride so quietly.' 'I have been thinking,' I replied, 'several times during the ride, as I looked at a tempting wall or gate, of that line of Byron's applied to one who has spent his force, and was unmoved by Beauty; "But now it moved him as it moves the wise."' I took a single leap to show him that it was in me, if I chose; but all day I was, as I have been all this visit, depressed and low. To-day—this afternoon, at least—I spent in rifle-shooting with Struan, against the side of the rocks at Leckhampton Hill, making very good practice, and putting six balls in the mark out of eight. Such has been my employment—*distraction*, in the French sense, and so far only, good or useful.

A merchant vessel has brought the news from the Cape that Major Wilmot, my brother's best friend, is killed.—Farewell.

Here he met Tennyson, but could not pursue the acquaintance, being forced to return to Brighton. 'I feel,' he says, 'as low as a schoolboy going back to a school which he dislikes. I had not time to call on Tennyson.'

On his arrival at Brighton, he proceeded to Lewes, to attend the assizes,

* Where his brother Captain Harry was buried, in May, 1864.

at which he had been appointed chaplain to the sheriff. There is a graphic account, in his letters, of the trials held in the months of March and July. The sermons which he preached were, first, on St. John viii. 32—'The kingdom of the truth;' secondly, on St. John vii. 17—'Obedience the organ of spiritual knowledge.' Both have been published. It was curious, I have been told, to watch the pew set apart for the judges—Mr. Justice Coleridge and Mr. Baron Parke. Its occupants, on the conclusion of the 'afternoon service,' expecting nothing to disturb their intellect, settled themselves into decent postures, full of ease, for their customary reverie. But before three minutes of the sermon had passed by, their attention was riveted, their position changed, and they listened with evident interest to a discourse of forty minutes in length. The conclusion of the first sermon was remembered well:—

In the name of Christ, I respectfully commend these thoughts, for the special consideration of the present week, to those who will be pledged by oath to witness to the whole truth they know, and nothing but the truth; to those who,—permitted by the merciful spirit of English jurisprudence to watch that their clients, if condemned, shall be condemned only according to the law,—are yet not justified by the spirit of the life of Christ in falsifying or obscuring facts, and who, owing a high duty to a client, owe one yet higher to the truth; and lastly, to those whom the severe intellectual and, much more, moral training of the English bar has qualified for the high office of disentangling truth from the mazes of conflicting testimony.

From the trial hour of Christ—from the cross of the Son of God—there arises the principle, to which His life bore witness, that the first lesson of Christian life is this

—be true; and the second this—be true; and the third this—be true.

In April he took the chair at a meeting in which Professor Zaba, a Pole, expounded a new system of mnemonics. He introduced this gentleman with a speech which he afterwards reduced in a condensed form to writing. It will be found in Letter cxxxii.

Shortly afterwards, perhaps the most interesting occurrence in his ministerial career took place. He narrates the occasion of it, and exposes the subjects on which he intended to speak. He sums up in a few words the principles of his teaching, and it is deeply to be regretted that an oversensitiveness prevented him from carrying out his intention.

Tuesday, April 14.

The young men of my congregation have invited me to meet them on Tuesday evening next, on which occasion I understand they mean to present an address expressive of gratitude for the instruction they have received from the pulpit and the platform. It is kindly meant; and I hope it may not be marred by any misunderstanding amongst themselves, or by any compromise of myself in the wording of the address, into which zeal may easily hurry them. As I am not to know the contents beforehand, I cannot prepare a reply; but I am thinking of briefly reviewing some of the leading principles which I have aimed at inculcating, such as the soul of goodness in things evil—positive truth, instead of negative error—belief in the Divine character of Christ's humanity, antecedent to belief in its Divine origin—spiritual truth discerned by the soul instead of the intellect, in opposition to rationalism—truth made up of two opposite propositions, instead of a *via media* between the two. Perhaps I may take the opportunity of crushing the attacks of the *Record* on me, and its allega-

tions of my belonging to the Kingsley school; but of this I am not quite sure I am not likely to have such another opportunity.

The address, a portion of which is quoted below,* was presented to him at the Town Hall, on April 21st. More than eighty signatures were appended to it, and every signature was written from the heart. The meeting was unique in Brighton. Ever since his arrival in that town, Mr. Robertson had given much time and thought to the elevation of the young men of his congregation, especially those belonging to the class of clerks, assistants in shops, servants, and others. Gradually his influence over them became permanent. We have seen by his conduct at the meeting of the Early Closing Association, that he did not purchase that influence by flattering their views, or joining in their popular

* 'We desire to express to you the high and affectionate esteem in which your name is and has long been held among us, and also to render you sensible of our gratitude for the advantages we have derived from your labours both in and out of the pulpit.

'There is entertained among us a strong feeling of obligation for the exalted views of all that is highest and holiest in religion with which you have familiarised our minds, for the elevated standard of morality to which you have taught us to conform our lives, and no less for those lessons of philosophy and secular wisdom which it has been so often our privilege to learn from your lips.

'We would also assure you, honoured sir of our due appreciation of your ready sympathy with the cause of the young men in this town, your undeviating courtesy and kindness in conforming to their wishes and requirements, and your cordial exertions to promote their welfare.

'Permit us, in conclusion, respectfully, but most sincerely, to express a hope that we may long continue to enjoy the advantages of your residence amongst us, and that un-failing health and domestic happiness, o'er-shadowed by no cloud or sorrow, may enable you with entire satisfaction to pursue the studies and fulfil the duties incident to that exalted calling to which you are devoted.'

clamour. His sincerity of purpose at that meeting, which at first had partially repelled them, afterwards attracted them. They felt sure of him. They knew that they were loved not too well, but wisely. And Christianity became dear to them through him. They saw before their eyes continually how manly and noble a Christian life might be. Nor did he cease to urge this life upon them. 'With all the earnestness he possessed,' said one of them, 'and how great that was! he exhorted us to begin in our youth to say with David, O God! Thou art *my* God! early will I seek Thee.' Many of his sermons were especially addressed to them. It was easy to excite and interest them, but he was not content with that. He urged them to discredit feeling unless it passed into and was aroused by action for Christ. The novelty of his views and the youthfulness of his character were calculated to make young men adopt him as a leader. But he would not have them rest on him; he warned them that if they would be spiritually strong, they must learn how to stand alone with God and their own soul. He refused to claim dominion over their faith. 'One was their Master,' he said, 'even Christ.' Thus he endeavoured to guide them into Christian manhood; and he succeeded. He had the rare pleasure of seeing the trees he had planted bearing matured and goodly fruit.

He answered the address in a few words. As he spoke, all rose, full of sincere emotion, and bound by the unity of that emotion into one body, in which the different ranks, the different opinions, and the various interests which in common life made them jar with one another—were for-

gotten. They were all fused together by the fire of a common love. He himself was deeply moved. He said in words which were never forgotten, and which drew forth enthusiastic and heartfelt cheers:—

We are not here to bandy compliments with one another; you have not come to flatter me, and I have not come with any affected coyness, to pretend to disclaim your flattery, in order that it may be repeated. You have told me in the frank spirit of an Englishman that my ministry has done you good. Frankly, as an Englishman, I tell you with all my heart I do believe it. I know that there are men who once wandered in darkness and doubt, and could find no light, who have now found an anchor and a rock and a resting-place. I know that there are men who were feeling bitterly and angrily what seemed to them the unfair differences of society, who now regard them in a gentle, more humble, and more tender spirit. I know that there are rich who have been led to feel more generously towards the poor. I know that there are poor who have been taught to feel more truly and more fairly towards the rich. I believe—for on such a point *God* can only *know*—that there are men who have been induced to place before themselves a higher standard, and perhaps, I may venture to add, have conformed their lives more truly to that standard. I dare not hide my belief in this. I am deeply grateful in being able to say that, if my ministry were to close to-morrow, it would not have been, in this town at least, altogether a failure.

He concluded with a sentence, which was the only answer he deigned to give to the taunts which had been levelled against him for his interest in young men, and in the subjects, both theological and social, which then engrossed them:—

'Let the words of that young man'

(Mr. C. Evans, who had presented the address) 'answer for it, whether there is Rationalism or Socialism in my teaching.'

Yet in this, the most triumphant moment apparently of his ministry, he was at heart profoundly sad and wearied, partly from the loneliness of his life, and partly, as he hints himself in the following letter, from physical exhaustion and disease. It is sorrowful and strange to think how little men knew what lay beneath that quiet and resolute exterior:—

Wednesday, April 21.

The meeting of last night passed off as heavily as it was possible to conceive. One of the young men rose and presented the address with a warm and cordial speech, to which I replied. The best thing of the evening was a very short speech in three sentences from one of the young men, who said he had been to the Great Exhibition, and had received from it a comment upon the doctrine which lay at the bottom of Mr. Robertson's teaching—not to call anything common or unclean. It showed a finer and more masterly appreciation of what I aim at than I had expected. I returned thanks; but certain things which had been said had so damped all power of enjoying, that I left unsaid all I had meant to say, and confined myself to mere thanks. I had intended to state the principles of my teaching, such as the establishment of truth, instead of the negative destruction of error—suggestive teaching, instead of dogmatic—working from within outwards, instead of the converse, &c.

I send you a *Guardian* with the account. It has somewhat mangled what I said, by putting in pithless and unmeaning words and epithets, as well as by altering and inserting sentences; but, on the whole, except the last sentence, it is tolerably correct. I wish I could describe the dreary

feelings of yesterday evening. Eighty persons were present to do me honour, and express kindly feelings to me; the applause was enthusiastic, yet all seemed weary, stale, flat, unprofitable. In the midst of the homage of a crowd, I felt alone, and as if friendless.

The first sheet of this letter was written in a very gloomy mood—the result partly of the excitement of the preceding evening, and the preaching and speaking of the last two days. It still remains. I think it only just to myself to ask you to read this sheet first, as I cannot judge at all whether I am seeing fairly or through a distorted medium—whether I am myself, or in an unnatural mood. Do not, therefore, read what I have written without this allowance.

Mr. J— Y— and Mr. B—, whom I knew in Heidelberg, are coming to take tea with me this evening, so I shall forget my low spirits and myself, and perhaps see things more justly; at least whenever I feel strongly, I make it a rule now to assume the probability that physical causes have something to do with the matter.

The depression which he mentions in the above letter, and the almost passionate sadness which appears in his correspondence, have given rise to many suggestions on the part of Mr. Robertson's theological opponents, that his change of views did not give him peace of mind. The *Christian* charity of the *Record* has gone a step further, and stated, either in its own criticism or through correspondents, that Robertson's later opinions arose either from a diseased brain or from a self-conceit which urged him to seek a popular reputation by the advocacy of 'strange doctrines.'

The ensuing letters reply to these accusations. They show that his views did not conduce to his popularity, but to the contrary. They

show that his opinions were not rashly formed, but grew slowly out of a clear, thoughtful, and conscientious development of his spiritual being. They forbid any one to assert that there was the slightest hesitation in his convictions. They exhibit him as believing with all his heart that he was right, and as finding in his opinions the explanation of God's work on men, and of God's dealing with his own life.

Of all the crimes with which a clergyman can be charged, the worst is the crime of seeking for popularity at the expense of spiritual honesty. Of this crime the *Record* has accused a man who, if he was anything, was truthful. It is not needful to make any serious attempt to disprove this calumny. It is only needful to say plainly that it is a falsehood, and to leave to the judgment of the public the character of the *Record* and the character of Mr. Robertson.

Brighton : December 7, 1852.

MY DEAR — . . . I would not exchange the light I have for the twilight I have left, for all that this earth can give. Some ask whether I have more peace. In men I sympathise less—infinity less; in God, all. I shall be left alone, as my Master was. I am hated by some who loved me once—not for what I do, but for what I think. I have long foreseen it. And knowing that the Father is with me, *I am not afraid to be alone*, though to a man surely not ungently made there is some sharpness in the thought.

With respect to vacillations in views, I can say, simply and decidedly, there have been none. Clearer, brighter light every day, and more assurance what truth is and whom I serve, I walk not in doubt, but in the light of noonday certainty.

My own personal experience strangely

capacitates me to understand the feelings of the Saviour more and more, even to each separate sentence. As, for instance, 'From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?'

I have not tried to form any party in this town. I have avoided even the attempt to attach individuals to myself. I humbly thank God that no one can accuse me of proselytism. I have not even met half way those who seemed inclined to receive the truth I taught. I have left the truth in its own majesty, to be received or rejected. And every day makes me rejoice that I have sternly adhered to this rule. For I find the timid shrink, and those that were warm grow cold; and I am at least saved from the pang that He suffered, in losing those to whom He had given personal and individual affection. Yet, in a few instances, not even from this . . .

Brighton : December 9, 1852.

MY DEAR — . . . I have tried in my ministry to exalt the spirit above the letter, to show the liberty of the children of God, their emancipation from the law by love, the abrogation of the law to such as love, the Spirit of the Cross, the Divine majesty of Christ. My aim has been to show the deep truth which lies at the root of the popular formulas, to tell people how much more true they are than they themselves know, which was exactly what our Lord did in reference to the law, and which is always a dangerous enterprise, because, if people miss the old cant words of which *they* did not feel the meaning, they fear that the meaning is gone.

I could not tell you too strongly my own deep and deepening conviction that the truths which I teach are true. Every year they shed fresh light on one another, and seem to stretch into immensity. They explain to me life, God, and the Bible; and I am certain that what fresh light I

shall receive will be an expansion and not a contradiction of what I have. As for the words in which I try to make others see what I see, they indeed are poor and bewildered enough. But there is no bewilderment in my mind, though much that is incomplete. The principles are rooted in human nature, God, and the being of things, and I find them at the root of every page in Scripture. The *principles* cannot be reversed. My mind has grown by a regular development year by year, and I could as easily say that I doubt my own existence as doubt those truths which have grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. They are not opinions nor theories, but convictions: part of my being, of my habits of thought and life, colouring everything, 'the fountain light of all my day, the master light of all my seeing.' These are the truths for which men go to the stake, and relinquish, joyfully, friends, sympathy, good name, worldly prospects. They do not depend upon the accuracy of an intellectual process, but upon the verdict of all the highest powers of soul. For instance, I would not give up a single thing on the certainty that St. Paul did not write the Epistle to the Hebrews. These are matters of intellectual investigation, and I am not sure that I am right, because I am neither certain that all the evidence is before me, nor that I have rightly judged from the evidence. But if I am asked to surrender *convictions*, I cannot do it for any reward, nor for fear of any loss; these depend upon all I know of God; they are the things seen in the noon-day light of my soul; and I cannot pretend to submit my judgment in such things to wiser men or better men. It would be mock humility. I might just as readily, at their bidding, say that green is scarlet. It may be so; but if it be, my whole vision is deranged by which I have walked and lived, and by which this world is beautiful. To say that I am ready for any martyrdom in the defence

of my *convictions*, and that I cannot affect to have doubts or misgivings about them, is only to say that they are convictions.

I write all this for your sake. Be sure I would never teach with the sharp angular distinctness of assertion that I do, what were to me only peradventures. Believe me, with all the sympathy of one to whom your spiritual guidance is partly given.

During the months of May and June he prepared his class of young persons for confirmation. The labour which every year he bestowed upon this work was great. He personally interested himself in all the candidates, whether they were bright or dull in intellect. Indeed, the heavier the clay, the more pains did he take in his tillage. He endeavoured to make himself master of the peculiarities of character belonging to each of his class, and of the drift of their lives, that he might adapt to these his teaching. While brimming over with images and apt illustrations calculated to attract youth, and to fix the truths he spoke of in the memory, that teaching was laid on so solid a basis of learning, and supported by such original thinking, that the most advanced scholar could listen to it with satisfied pleasure.

Nor was this teaching formal: lectures repeated each year without variation. It is true it did not alter from year to year in the main subjects, or in their order, but in form and in illustrations it changed continually. It laid all the events of the day under contribution. The form it had was worn as loosely as possible, and never hindered him from expansion. Often, inspired by a question from his class, he would leave his regular course, and speak on the difficulty proposed, or the shade of feeling suggested, for

more than half an hour, without pausing a moment, and that with a logical sequence—a grasp, an eloquence, and a fire of imagination which were the same, whether he discussed a point of theology, a shade of criticism, or a subtle winding in the labyrinth of the heart. No one could listen without being stirred, excited, and feeling a higher life possible. He knew that he produced this effect, and hence arose his constant warnings against a religion of transient enthusiasm, always embodied the Sunday before the Confirmation in such sermons as ‘The Parable of the Sower,’* ‘Jacob’s Wrestling.’†

This year the preparation of the candidates exhausted him greatly.

I am undergoing the reaction (he writes) consequent upon strained anxieties and attention. When all was over yesterday at the Confirmation, I felt as if I had no work to turn to, and it was with extreme repugnance and aversion that I contemplated preparation for Sunday. It reminds me of the ‘Song of the Shirt’—‘work, work, work;’ and the perpetual treadmill necessity of being for ever ready twice a week with earnest thoughts on solemn subjects is a task which is quite enough to break down all originality, and convert a racehorse into a dray.

Fortunately for his health, an outward interest now broke in upon his life. The elections for Brighton came on in July, and they interested him as much as if he had been a violent political partisan. But it was in reality the quicker life of the town and the public excitement which delighted him, and took him for the time out of his restricted sphere of action. The struggle, the play of human passions, the battle, in which he wished to see only

the contest, and not the rascality, roused in him all the combative enthusiasm of his warrior nature. He was seen everywhere—his blue eyes flashing, his brown hair thrown back from his forehead, his walk rapid, his words quick and stirring. ‘I have read and done nothing all this week,’ he writes, ‘the excitement about the election has been so great.’ In accordance with his usual practice of bringing the events of daily life under the influence of the pulpit, he preached a sermon on the duties of electors.* He took as his subject the election of Matthias in the room of Judas. A short quotation will best show the spirit in which he fulfilled his task:—

Delicate and difficult as the introduction of such a subject from the pulpit must be, yet it seems to me the imperative duty of a minister of Christ—from which he cannot, except in cowardice, shrink—to endeavour to make clear the great Christian landmarks which belong to such an occurrence. But let me be understood. His duty is not to introduce politics in the common sense of the word, meaning thereby the views of some particular party. The pulpit is not to be degraded into the engine of a faction. Far, far above such questions, it ought to preserve the dignity of a voice which speaks for eternity, and not for time. If possible, not one word should drop by which a minister’s own political leanings can be discovered.

Yet there must be broad principles of right and wrong in such a transaction as in any other. And in discharge of my duty I desire to place those before you.

In this sermon he steadily kept out of sight his own political views. He only declared the great principles according to which a vote should be given. Beyond the pulpit his influ-

* Vol. i.

† Vol. ii.

* Vol. iv. 131.

ence was not unimportant, and he did not hesitate to exert it fairly in behalf of the liberal candidates, Sir George Pechell and Mr. Trelawney. He was the only Church of England clergyman who voted for these gentlemen; and owing to all the rest of his brethren supporting the other side, and to some reports industriously circulated concerning Mr. Trelawney's opinions, it was a courageous vote. It enlisted against him the conservative and the 'religious' militia of Brighton. The letter which follows refers to these events, and his share in them:—

July 20.

The election is over. Lord Alfred Hervey was elected with a majority of about 250 over Trelawney, who, however, polled nearly 1,200 votes (I write from vague memory). I suppose people will be shocked at my vote, even those who voted for Pechell, though there is no difference between his politics and Trelawney's. A stranger, quite a gentleman in appearance, held up his hands on being told it, and said, 'Why, Trelawney is an atheist.' 'Do you know that for a fact?' said I. 'No, but I was told so.' 'Then I must say that as it is a very solemn charge, you ought to inquire before you assert it.' Five minutes after, a lady met me, and said, 'Why, Mr. Trelawney is a Catholic.' So, after thorough investigation, I wrote a note to this gentleman, and told him Trelawney was neither an atheist nor a Catholic, but a member of the Church of England—a man, as I was credibly informed by Mr. Seymour, of high character. I concluded with the suggestion that it was due to his honour to contradict his own statement wherever it had been made.

I omitted to tell you, the surprise at the polling-booth at my vote was quite amusing. I saw by the countenances of the bystanders that it excited much interest to know which

way it would be given. There was quite a breathless attention while the name, address, &c., were being taken down; and when I said, 'Pechell and Trelawney,' voices cried out on all sides, 'Thank you, sir,' 'Bravo,' 'Well done, indeed; that's a man!' and the respect was extreme. I could not help fancying, from the tone of the remarks, that they appreciated the difficulty of a clergyman in voting on that side. What struck me most was, there were no uproarious cheers, but an evidently respectful and grateful acceptance of the act and its motives.

On his return from his usual absence during October, he found Brighton boiling over with excitement on the Sabbath question. It had been proposed to open the Crystal Palace on Sundays. It was at once inferred that Christianity was in mortal danger, and to protect it from its death-wound, the whole religious phalanx of Brighton rallied round its standard. Large talking assemblies met together, and the wildest and most unfounded assertions were made. The *Times* was accused of the grossest venality, because it defended the throwing open of the Palace; but the accuser, a clergyman, was obliged to eat his own words. Mr. Robertson alone stood against the torrent in behalf of Christian liberty. He did not, for several reasons, approve of the opening of the Palace on Sunday; but he did refuse to adopt arguments against it based on the supposition of the non-abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath. He preached a sermon, 'The Sydenham Palace, and the Religious Non-observance of the Sabbath,'* on the whole subject, in which he declared that he had satisfied himself.

* Vol. ii. 180.

November 16, 1852.

MY DEAR TOWER,—As you will be here next week, I will not write you a volume, for nothing else would do. I preached on the subject on Sunday, satisfactorily to myself at least—a thing which has occurred to me but once or twice in all my ministry; so I am thoroughly prepared with an opinion on a matter I have well considered. I will say at present I am quite resolved to sign no petition. Dr. V.'s pamphlet does not go to the root of the matter. I agree with him in viewing the move, so far as it is an *avowed* innovation, with great jealousy; but I cannot ask for a state enactment to reimpose a law which Christianity has repealed, without yielding the very principle of Christianity. Historically, the Lord's Day was not a transference of the Jewish Sabbath at all from one day to another. St. Paul, in Rom. xvi. 5, 6, speaks of a *religious non-observance* of the Sabbath; I cannot say or think that the Crystal Palace affair is a *religious non-observance*, believing it to be merely a lucrative speculation; nevertheless, I have nothing to do with that. The Sabbath is abrogated, and the observance of a day of rest is only a most wise human law now, not to be enforced by *penalties*. Besides, how dare we refuse a public concession to the poor man of a right of recreation which has been long assumed by the rich man with no protest or outcry from the clergy, who seem touched to the quick only when desecration, as they call it, is noisy and vulgar.

Mr. Tower suggested, in answer, Bishop Horsley's critical treatment of the question, and to this letter he replied:—

'Horsley's Sermons' I only vaguely remember. I am quite at ease on the subject. The critical disposal of this or that text would not alter my views. I am certain of the genius and spirit of Christianity; certain of St. Paul's *root thoughts*—far more certain than I can be of the correctness or incorrectness of any isolated

interpretation; and I must reverse all my conceptions of Christianity—which is the mind of Christ—before I can believe the Evangelico-Judaic theory; which is that Mr. — may, without infringement of the 4th Commandment, drive his carriage to church twice every Sunday, but a poor man may not drive his cart;—that the two or three hours spent in the evening by a noble lord over venison, champagne, desert, and coffee, are no desecration of the command; but the same number spent by an artisan over cheese and beer in a tea-garden will bring down God's judgment on the land. It is worse than absurd. It is the very spirit of that Pharisaism which our Lord rebuked so sternly. And then men get up on platforms as — did: and quietly assume that they are the religious, and that all who disagree, whether writers in the *Times*, Sir R. Peel, or the 'sad exceptions,' of whom I was one, to which he alluded, are either neologians or hired writers! Better break a thousand sabbaths than lie and slander thus! But the sabbath of the Christian is the consecration of all time to God: of which the Jewish Sabbath was but the type and shadow. See Col. ii. 16, 17. Bishop Horsley's attempt to get over that verse is miserable, I remember.

'Six hundred churches wanted.' Yes! but when shall we have different hours for service and different congregations in one church, say one for three congregations: and so save two-thirds of the money spent on stone and brick, that it may be spent on the truer temple, human beings, in whom God's Spirit dwells? They do this on the Continent, and with no inconvenience. Besides, the inconvenience and mutual giving way would be all so much gain for Christian life, instead of an objection to the plan.

A member of his congregation wrote to him on this subject. He replied:—

60, Montpelier Road: November 17.

MY DEAR MR. WRIGHT,—I am very

sorry indeed that I should have left my meaning ambiguous on Sunday. I will briefly recapitulate what I said, or meant to say.

I tried to show that in St. Paul's judgment the Sabbath is abrogated, being, as he calls it (Col. ii. 16, 17), a shadow of which Christ is the substance. This Sabbath has given way to a larger, grander, more spiritual Sabbath—the Rest of the people of God—a life claimed, not in parts, but as a whole, for Him—a perpetual sacrifice.

To urge this abrogated Sabbath again on men's consciences as indispensable to salvation, St. Paul reckons as a giving up of the spirit of Christianity (Gal. iv. 10, 11). Nevertheless, it is perfectly competent for the Christian Church to appoint days and times, as she shall find them needful, to aid her infirmities or express her love, provided only that she does not bind them on human consciences as indispensable.

Such a day, among others, she did appoint in very early times—the Lord's Day. But it was not a transference of the Jewish Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, but arose out of the great Christian principle, which views all life in reference to the Church's crucified and risen Lord. And thus time was divided into cycles, larger and smaller, the cycle of the week or the cycle of the year, each representing the death in which all daily die—the resurrection in which all daily rise. Friday and Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Day were the epochs respectively of these cycles.

I hold this institution of the Lord's Day to be a most precious and blessed one, not to be dispensed with except with danger; and I believe that no one who loves his country can look on any measure which is likely to desecrate its observance, or break through our English feelings towards it, without great misgiving and apprehension.

And St. Paul modifies his broad view of a repealed Sabbath, by acknowledging

that there may be a religious and conscientious observance of that day. 'One man esteemeth one day above another. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. . . . He that observeth the day observeth it to the Lord.' On the other hand, he modifies it again, by emphatically requiring that the *non-observance* of the Sabbath must be a religious non-observance—a conscientious, and not merely a licentious or latitudinarian one. He that observeth not the day, *to the Lord* he observeth it not.

Now here is my first objection to the spirit in which the Crystal Palace is proposed. It contemplates a non-observance of the Sabbath, but not a religious one. It is not non-observance to the Lord. It does not proceed from a sublime view of Christian life as one great Sabbath, but from laxity, indifference, and love of lucre. At least, I fear so, for it is put forward in the light of a speculation.

My second objection—not so much to the thing itself as to the grounds on which it is advocated—is the assumption, that to humanise the people is identical with Christianising them. I am very anxious to humanise and polish the people; but I cannot shut my eyes to the lesson of history—that the arts, such as painting, sculpture, music, poetry, have not in themselves ennobled, but often deteriorated nations. The worship of the Beautiful is not the worship of Holiness; and therefore to talk of statue galleries and museums as if they were to do the work which can only be done by the Cross of Christ, and to represent such æsthetic amusements as the true and right *religious* use of rest, I hold to be mere false sentimentality.

But with all this I am strongly opposed to every endeavour to put down the Crystal Palace by petition or legislative enactments, on the three following grounds, which I meant to distinctly name in my sermon:—

I. Because it is a return to Judaism to enforce, by human enactment, that which St. Paul declares repealed. I may much

regret the probable tendencies of this measure; but still I cannot try to forbid by law a sort of recreation for the poor man in public gardens and public picture galleries, which the rich man has freely allowed himself in private gardens and galleries, with no protest whatever from the clergy.

2. Because a severe and stringent law injures the conscience. Whoever multiplies enactments beyond what is essential, tempts human consciences to transgression. For it is transgression when a man does a thing which he thinks wrong, even though it be not abstractedly wrong. Hence St. Peter speaks against 'putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither he nor his fathers had been able to bear.' And hence St. Paul speaks of the 'motions of sin which were by the law;' that is, caused and stirred into motion by the law. I am persuaded that much abandonment is caused by the strict severity of Sabbath observance, when others, who are not fit for it, are compelled to obey, at the risk of being treated as infidels. Many a criminal on the scaffold can trace his first declension in crime to such a restriction and the feeling of hopelessness and defiance which seized him when he had once broken it.

3. And I refuse to sign such a petition, lastly, because to exalt a 'law positive,' that is, a law contrived for temporary and special ends—into the ranks of a moral law externally binding, has always been the first step towards relaxing the reverence for that which is moral. Thus the Pharisees were very scrupulous about tithing mint, anise, and cumin: justice, judgment, and truth they cared little for. They were furious at a transgression of the Fourth Commandment, but they would allow a man to be as proud, and selfish, and tyrannical as he pleased. And so, in the same way, there is a tendency now to be very indignant about a poor man's spending Sunday afternoon in a tea-garden, whilst there is little zeal against the real damning sins of social life. Why do they not preach a crusade against noblemen driving in the

park? Or why do they speak of God sending a judgment on this nation for a Crystal Palace, while they quietly ignore the fact, or are too polite to take notice of it, that four-fifths of our male population are living in a state of concubinage till they are married? Why do they hold up hands of pious indignation when a train runs by, while more than one religious person in this town drives regularly to church on fine days as well as wet? Why do they say that it is a crime to sacrifice a single policeman to the comfort of the community, by making him work on the Sabbath, when their own servants are 'sacrificed'—if it be sacrifice—in making their beds, cleaning their rooms, boiling their luxurious hot potatoes, &c., &c., &c., none of which are either works of necessity or works of mercy—the only works, they say, which are excepted from the rule? Why do they not grapple with the slander, and the gossip, and the pride of society, and the crimes of the upper classes? Why are they touched to the quick only when desecration of the Sabbath puts on a *vulgar* form? Because, as I said before, scrupulosity about laws 'positive' generally slides into laxity about the eternal laws of right and wrong.

For all these reasons, I am against the petition movement, and strongly against it. Besides, though I look jealously and suspiciously at the Crystal Palace plan, I am not yet certain that it may not be an improvement on the way in which the poorer classes at present spend their Sundays. I hope this is clear, my dear Mr. Wright. I have written it rapidly, having much to do, and concisely; but I trust it will be clear. You are quite welcome to show it to any one who thought my sermon ambiguous.

Of course, refusing to sign the petition for an enactment against the opening of the Palace on Sunday, he was openly and covertly attacked. One of his brother ministers alluded to him in a public manner as the

'sad exception' to the Christian unanimity of the clergymen of Brighton. And yet he was more particular in his observance of that day than many of his censurers. He has often walked ten miles and more to preach on a Sunday, rather than accept a carriage or take a fly, and this lest he should cause his brother to offend. But alas! what matters that, as long as men act and speak as if they held that true religion consists in holding orthodox views, and not in doing right actions? 'This man could not be of God, because he did not keep the Sabbath day!'

In the midst of all this outward rebuke, and in spite of the increased loneliness of his position, his spirit seems to have been growing humbler, calmer, and more gentle. The following words may well close the history of his life in this year:—

The life of Christ and His death, after all, are the only true solution of the mystery of human life; to that, after all, all the discords of this world's wild music must be attuned at last. There is a sharp pain—past pain—in that letter which you sent me, but yet how instinctively one feels at once that the tone of Christianity is wanting. I do not mean the cant expressions, but the genuine tone which numbers of real men and women have learned by heart.

It may be hereafter mellowed into this, as I hope my tone will; but neither are as yet, though I have got what your correspondent has not, the words of the Song; only I have not the music. And what are the words without? Yet it is something to feel the deep, deep conviction, which has never failed me in the darkest moods, that Christ had the key to the mysteries of Life, and that they are not insoluble; also, that the spirit of the Cross is the condition which will put any one in possession of the same key: 'Take my yoke upon you, and ye

shall find rest for your souls.' It is something, much, to know this; for, knowing it, I feel it to be unphilosophical and foolish to quarrel with my lot, for my wisdom is to transmute my lot by meekness into gold. With God I cannot quarrel, for I recognise the beauty and justice of His conditions. It is a grand comfort to feel that God is right, whatever and whoever else may be wrong. I feel St. Paul's words, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.'

Letters from January 1852 to December 1852.

CXXIV.

MY DEAR —,—If I do not reply at once, I may possibly never reply at all, so much has the habit of procrastination or the *à quoi bon* question taken possession of me. Secondly, if I do not reply at once, I may in honesty, after reading your heterodoxy, be compelled to administer castigation. And, thirdly, a slight *épanchement de cœur* says, 'I shall not last long in your bosom, cold sir, so write to your friend while the fit is on you.'

Well, I am no heretic in my affections either, and my friendship is as truly yours as ever, my dear ——. As warmly? Hum—why *all* was warm and effervescing once, now all is cold and flat. If a mouse could change into a frog, or a falcon into a penguin, would the affections be as *warm* as before, albeit they might remain unalterable? I trow not, so I only say, you have as much as a cold-blooded animal can give, whose pulsations are something like one per minute.

I cannot agree with you in wishing for a war. It is very horrible, and though I think there is nothing of personal danger in it that appals, the thought of what would befall our *women* gives me many a sleepless night. I expect an invasion; nevertheless, I detest war. But Mr. Cobden and Co.'s doctrines prostitute national honour to the 'wealth of nations,' and have left us unable to defend ourselves, or even to arm

our soldiers as well as savages can afford to arm themselves.

CXXV.

I do not remember exactly what I said on E— V—'s birthday about God's designs. A conversation grows out of warm striking of mind on mind, and it is almost impossible to reproduce it. At this moment it has as entirely gone from me as if it had never been. I can only conjecture that I said something to the effect that God's plan was not thwarted by transgression and a new plan begun; as, in a siege, the plan of the invader is frustrated by a sap meeting him, and then a counter-sap and fresh mines carried on below to foil that; but that God's *idea* of Humanity is, and ever was, Humanity as it is in Jesus Christ; that so far as it fails of that, His idea may be *said* to have not been realised; but we must be cautious of first using this language to express rudely our mode of conceiving a truth, and then arguing from it, as if it were real, and not merely a human mode of thought. The idea of a tree or plant—say the vine—is of the tree in its perfection. In the English climate you may say it has failed, that is, it has not attained the stature which of right belongs to the plant; it is a fallen, abortive thing; but you do not mean by that, that its Creator intended that particular plant to succeed, and was disappointed in the attempt. Fallen, man is, in comparison of the Divine idea of Humanity, but it was no failure. However, it is impossible to write out in cold blood, unstimulated by something naturally going before, on such a subject. It becomes a mere dry essay.

CXXVI.

Lewes: Friday, 7.45 p.m.

From Tuesday until this moment I have scarcely had an instant. We are in court by nine, and directly it is over I dine either with the judges or the high sheriff. We are this moment out, after eleven hours'

sitting. A horrible murder has occupied them all day, which is not over yet. We begin to-morrow at eight a.m. I shall write to you shortly, with an account of the last few days. I am thoroughly and completely tired.

* * * *

I write during an interval of a most painful character—during the trial of an unhappy woman for the murder of her husband. She is at this moment in a swoon. The judge has stopped the case until her recovery. I am sitting close to him, and his observations to me from time to time seem to show that there is not the slightest chance of her escape. It is a horrible case. She poisoned him in order to marry a young man, or boy, who has just given evidence against her in a disgraceful way. His only excuse is, that she had already tried to throw the murder upon him, and I believe he had a hand in it; so, too, Baron Parke has just told me he thinks. The last witness is now giving his evidence; and when the counsel for the defence has spoken, and the judge has given his charge, I imagine the jury cannot doubt ten minutes about their verdict—that being '*guilty*,' her fate is sealed. No, I am wrong, her own child is just called to witness against her—a poor little boy seven years old. The poor miserable creature herself, during the trial, which lasted all yesterday, and for the hour which it has continued this morning, has been almost in a swooning state. A quarter of an hour ago Dr. Taylor, the celebrated analyst, descended into the dock, and prescribed for her, the court meanwhile waiting several minutes in dead silence for her recovery. Dr. Taylor gave most interesting medical evidence yesterday, respecting the chemical analysis by which he discovered the presence of arsenic in large quantities in the deceased. The judge said to me as he took the book, 'Now you will hear some evidence worth listening to.'

I am thankful to say the little boy has not been permitted to give evidence; he knew nothing about an oath. Nothing

could have been more horrible than an only child taking his own mother's life away.

* * * *

I could write no more yesterday: the trial became too intensely interesting and painful to do anything. The judge's charge lasted, I should think, an hour and a half. The jury retired. An hour and a half passed in terrible suspense. At last they came: the foreman said at once, 'GUILTY.' Baron Parke put on the black cap. The poor woman, with burning cheeks and eyes as brilliant as fire with excitement, was held up between two turnkeys to receive her sentence. 'My lord,' said the clerk of arraigns, 'you have omitted two essential words; you did not say what death she is to die.' So the fainting thing was held up again, and the last sentence of the award repeated, with the words 'hanged by the neck.' I felt as if I were a guilty man in sitting by to see a woman murdered. But my eye caught the figure of the scoundrel Hickman, standing by to hear her who was suffering all for him condemned to die, without the slightest appearance of emotion. It was a most sickening spectacle from first to last; and there is not the smallest chance of her life being spared.

My sermon was delivered badly and hurriedly. On Friday and Saturday the sheriff was away, and I did his duty for him of escorting the judges. Every time I returned to my lodgings alone in the carriage-and-four I was not a little amused by the blast of trumpets which saluted me the moment I put my foot upon the carriage steps, and the mute awe of the crowd, who were imposed upon by my robes with the idea of something very grand. I felt half inclined to bid the row of javelin-men who uncovered in a line as I passed, and the trumpeters, have done with the solemn absurdity, at least in my case: but I reflected that forms and pageants are of far deeper importance for the masses than at first sight appears. A judge in black robes, instead of scarlet, would not be

half a judge. Many reflections of this kind occurred to my mind, some of which I put into my afternoon sermon; in the morning I was too hoarse and unwell to preach.

CXXVII.

March 26.

That miserable murderess, it is said, has confessed her crime, and exonerated Hickman entirely; but the truth of this latter portion of her story I rather doubt. Hanging a woman is a hideous thought. The impressions of last week will, I think, reverse for ever all my intellectual convictions of the need and obligation of capital punishment; yet I think I could have strung up Hickman with my own hands with considerable satisfaction; so strongly do natural instincts, partly dependent upon the mere difference between man and woman, bias, and even determine, judgments that seem purely intellectual, and framed in what Lord Bacon called 'a dry light.'

It shows, besides, how utterly unfit woman would be for innumerable functions which American speculation would open to her; for her feelings warp even more than ours, and that which is her glory in its place, would unfit her for all those duties which require the abeyance of the feelings. This is the very reason, viz., her deceivability through feeling, which St. Paul wisely assigns against her usurpation of the offices of public teaching, &c., that Adam was not deceived, but Eve, &c. How deep inspiration is! so deep that, like the clear sea around the West Indies, it seems shallow until you try to dive into it.

A thought occurred to me while writing, about invasion, which escaped by the time I got to the end of the above paragraph. It was this—the distinction between the French spirit in war and ours. Theirs is 'La Gloire!' Ours is 'Duty!' And this was the real source of England's sublime battle-cry at Trafalgar, and the reason, too,

His Sympathies and Principles.

why English troops can stand to be mowed down, as well as rush to the charge. It is the latter only for which the French are remarkable. 'Hard pounding, gentlemen,' said the Duke, at Waterloo, coming to a regiment which had lost, as some did, 600 men before they drew a trigger; 'we shall see who will pound the longest.' 'La Gloire' against 'Duty.' We shall see which will stand the longest, provided it is not all over at the first onset, which it is likely enough to be from the small practice of our best officers.

Poor — has lost his wife in confinement. I spent three hours with him to-day; some of the most profitable, in every sense of the word, that I have spent for a long time. He was severely shocked about it; he had not the slightest anticipation of such a termination. She had been going on well, and it was only on the day she died that unfavourable symptoms presented themselves. What a mournful case such an one always is! and how mysterious, remembering that Woman is, in her vocation of involuntary sacrifice, giving mute obedience to the Law—life only through suffering or death; the law to which her whole life, consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily, is a testimony. To me the event will be a great loss. I had promised myself a congenial acquaintance or friend—a man—for we have had several walks together and 'cottoned' to each other. He is going to leave Brighton, and stay with his brother, a clergyman, to get away from sad associations and reminiscences.

I gave a lecture on Thursday to the catechumens, on Jacob's journey from home—different from former times in treatment, and quite extempore; that is, the whole train of thought presented itself when I began, and I spoke for three-quarters of an hour, quite different from what I had intended: I have no notes.

CXXVIII.

You are quite right in your estimate of

the comparative value of Lord Carlisle's and Mr. Drummond's letter. I told you in a former letter how I valued the latter as the *only* indication I have received of a sympathy which had penetrated into the motive of my *Lectures*. If I did not believe that religion is poetry, and that all or most poetry is the half-way house to religion, inasmuch as the laws of both are the same, the opposites of both being Science, and the organ of both Intuition, I should not have spent my time on those *Lectures*;—indeed, this I had said beforehand.

* * * *

My tastes are with the aristocrat, my principles with the mob. I know how the recoil from vulgarity and mobocracy, with thin-skinned over-fastidious sensitiveness, has stood in the way of my doing the good I might do. My own sympathies and principles in this matter are in constant antagonism, and until these can be harmonised, true Christianity is impracticable. A greater felt the same—Milton; but he worked far more ardently for his principles, though, as life went on, he shrank more and more from the persons with whom his principles associated him; and so at last never went even to church, detesting the dissenter's vulgarity and the republican's selfishness. It is now some time since I became *conscious* of this discord in me, which mars usefulness; but it is curious that two letters, one from my mother, and one from a Miss Perry, a sister of Sir Erskine Perry, who was President of the Board of Education in India—a letter not written to me—have both within ten days remarked the same thing, the latter very acutely, in a review of the poetry affair, and preaching, and pamphlets generally. Lord Falkland—you see I select grand precedents to excuse myself—lived and died in the same way; and I suspect that if the Crown were ever to tyrannise, and the people were to rise, I should be found fighting against the mob—at least if, unfortunately, a queen were sovereign. To give a less august precedent: poor Balaam

was in a similar antagonism, with tastes, love of poetry, &c., on the side of Balak; principles on the side of Israel: only gold inclined the scales to the wrong side, which happily is not my temptation.

* * * *

CXXIX.

Your note did not reach me until the afternoon post to-day. I am thoroughly worn and sore with work: prayers last week—preaching Thursday, Friday, and Sunday—prayers again to-day. The usual result has followed—low spirits and deep depression. In such moods, I can see nothing truly—all is black and hopeless; but as I know the cause to be chiefly physical, I resolve to give no utterance to transient feeling, but wait until the cloud passes. Therefore, if in this anything sounds harsh or misanthropic, think it is not I, but one of the azure demons whose property I myself am for the nonce.

I will extract now, as nearly as I can remember, what I said about the *Birkenhead*.

After showing that the glory of the Cross—the text being, ‘God forbid that I should glory,’ &c.—consisted in ‘Obedience unto death,’ and hence inferring that man’s real greatness lies in Duty, I said—

‘And this surely is impressed upon us to-day with double power by the news which reached the shores of this country two days ago, of the sinking of 450 Britons within sight of the shore of Africa. And yet no Englishman could have read those letters who did not feel his heart swell with proud and grateful exultation in the country which gave him birth; for the two things which were conspicuous in the whole of that dire scene, and which redeemed the disaster from the character of common, vulgar death—were the spirit of Duty and the spirit of high Sacrifice; when men, summoned suddenly from their hammocks, mustered in silence, and obeyed the word of command as calmly, and as silently, and as simply on the deck of a sinking

vessel, as they would have done on the parade-ground on a gala day; and when men who had waited for permission to throw themselves overboard to save their lives, were arrested almost to a man by the first voice that warned them that they could only save themselves by the sacrifice of the women and children. God forbid that we should glory in our country’s wealth, her renown, or her military successes, merely as such; God forbid that we should glory in aught of hers, save in that English spirit of Duty and of Sacrifice, on which are stamped so unmistakably the lineaments of the Redeemer’s cross. It was this which constituted the real force of that sublime battle-cry which preceded one of the most terrific lessons ever given to the world by the lips of her artillery, and told men wherein lay the might and the majesty of a country which expects of her chosen sons, in the hour of death and danger, not that every man shall save his own life—nor that every man shall seek his own glory—but that “every man shall do his own duty.”’

That is nearly what I said, and I never said anything more from my heart. I do love and honour my dear old country with all my heart and soul; her sons cannot sing, paint, nor carve, but they can die at their posts silently, without thinking that ‘forty centuries are looking down upon them’ from the Pyramids.

The women of the *Birkenhead* had not the option of sacrifice for the men. They did not know beforehand the cost at which they must be saved. Besides, if the men could have so calculated, they would not have been worth the saving. It is their self-devotion which makes us feel how much worth they were; and therefore it is like the old ordeal: if they sank they deserved saving, and if they escaped they ought to have been drowned.

CXXX.

I am also reading Guizot’s ‘*Méditations et Etudes Morales*,’ in which there are

some valuable thoughts, at least in that on *Immortalité*—which is the one I have read. It singularly coincides with the views I gave last Sunday, but was read since. He shows that the belief in a future life is not the result of inductive and inferential reasonings—such as the incomplete justice here, or the dissatisfaction with all earthly good—but that rather, these result from the instinctive belief in immortality. Savages and children never doubt it: and the nearer you approach the instinctive state, the more indubitable it is. It is only when refinement, civilization, and science come that it grows dim. The attempt to rest our intuitions on a scientific basis, inevitable as the attempt is, brings with it doubt—and you get back faith again when you quit logic and science, and suffer the soul to take counsel with itself, or, in Scripture language, ‘when you become again a little child.’ Do read Wordsworth’s glorious ode in connection with this thought, which, indeed, is *the* thought of the whole ode.

CXXXI.

They tell me that it is impossible for one in the vortex of London gaiety to stop; that at last a single evening at home is intolerably *ennuyeux*. I partly believe it, and can only say that if it be so, it kills body and soul; and the severe restrictions, which seemed to me to be excessive, of persons whom I reckoned righteous overmuch, have more sense and reason in them than I supposed. And it appears to have been the same case with the fine ladies, and, to use the cant phrase, the smart people of Antioch, Ccrint, &c., &c. I suppose the Apostle had been contemplating the exhausted countenances and languid listlessness of the fashionables of the metropolis, when he said so vehemently, ‘She which liveth in pleasure is dead, while she liveth.’ I do not wonder at the success of Tractarianism among the Belgravians. Chanted services and innocent gentlemen with lilies of the valley in

their dresses, must afford something of the same cooling and sedative effect which I have felt in the burning south of France, in going from a garden on the walls of which innumerable lizards basked, and the sun’s rays beat down intolerably, at once into the coolness of an artificial cave.

I am not calm, yet I do try earnestly, and against many hindrances, within and without, to rule my life by Law, and to win that composure without which nothing can be done; but much is against me, and my very duties hinder me. Here am I, on Monday morning, as languid and wretched as a London lady who has come down from her room at 11 A.M., pale and wan after an evening of dissipation; but my languor and the over-strung state of brain which will make the next two days mere endurance of life, come not from pleasure, but from public speaking. I can only get rid of my exhaustion by getting rid of my duty. To-day it is rather worse than usual, because I was obliged to give an hour last night, and on every Sunday until confirmation, to prepare some young men who cannot come on any other evening. After that I drank tea with the V—s, and found them all suffering more or less from the effects of this sand-impregnated wind. I was too tired to talk. I am going to take a solitary walk on the Downs, untempting as the day and atmosphere are, to try to invigorate after yesterday, and to get up resolution for a speech at a meeting this evening, in which I take the chair.

CXXXII.

*Prefatory Observations to M. Zaba’s
Lecture on Polish Mnemonics.*

Memory depends on two circumstances—attention and the laws of association.

I. Attention.

Doubtless we are born with different natural capacities of memory. I leave

this to the physiologist to explain, to show why, with an equal volume of brain, one man may have judgment and another memory; why in certain states of health we can remember better than in others.

It is unquestionable, however, that memory can be improved; and it will generally, I believe, be found that this improvement arises from increased power of fixing the attention. No one can hope to remember who has not acquired the power of concentrating his attention.

A proof that this is one of the conditions of recollecting, we have in the fact that we recollect circumstances witnessed and things learnt in childhood, whereas we forget the events of yesterday; and this because when we come into the world all is new, startling, and arrests the attention. In later life we see as if we saw not, and hear as if we heard not. All is dulled; we are familiar with all, and our attention is languid and flags.

Another proof lies in the fact that people remember chiefly those points in which their profession or circumstances most interest them. For instance, one of the witnesses in the case of Rush, the murderer, deposed that the murderer wore a mask, or visor, made of linen or some soft material. On being cross-examined and asked how she could swear that it was not of paper, as the event occurred in a darkened house, she replied that she had observed of the mask that it did not rustle. There spoke the *woman's* memory dependent on feminine observation. No man would have remarked the material of the mask. It was the woman's province.

Another illustration occurs in the history of Jedediah Buxton, the ploughman, of wonderful arithmetical capacities. You might have given him the size of the circumference of a wheel, and he would have told you on the spot how many circumvolutions it would make in going round the globe. This was his only forte. In almost all other points he was deficient. As usual in England, they lion-

ised the wonderful ploughman. Among other places, they took him to the Opera. Upon inquiring what he thought of the celebrated dancer, he replied, 'Wonderful! she danced . . . steps in so many minutes!' That was all that he had attended to; that was all that he remembered. The gracefulness, the attitudes, the science, were all thrown away on him, and would be soon forgotten. Only in his own particular department of numbers, where his attention was stimulated by habit, did he see or remember anything.

II. Memory, again, depends upon the laws of association. What we mean by association is easily explained. When two things have been remarked together, in connection, it is a law of the mind that the presentation of the one at any future time will suggest the other. Thus, if an accident has occurred at a certain turning of a road to me, I shall never be able to pass that spot without the spontaneous re-appearance in my memory of the accident; or, if my friend has been in the habit of using a particular cane, the sight of the cane will conjure up a vivid recollection of my friend.

A great anatomist of the mind* has told us that the conditions of mental association are principally three—

1. That of analogy.
2. That of contrast.
3. That of juxtaposition.

Juxtaposition, or contiguity. As, for instance, if you were in the habit for six weeks consecutively of seeing two men walk arm in arm, the sight of the one would force you to think instantaneously of the other.

And this is the kind of association on which verbal memory depends. Words that have been in connection suggest each other. One sentence brings up the sentence that has been read before in contiguity with it. It is not the highest memory, but a very useful one.

Contrast—as when smallness suggests

* Aristotle.

the thought of greatness, or a mean action compels you to the thought of nobleness.

The highest of all, is that memory which suggests by *analogy*. It is this habit which furnishes the orator with illustrations and parallels. It is this which essentially characterises the inventor and creator; as when the bole of a spreading oak suggested itself to Smeaton, the architect of the Eddystone Lighthouse, when he desired to build an edifice which should brave the storm. And it is this which makes the great historian. Let me illustrate it from the life of Dr. Arnold. When Dr. Hampden was, as it seemed to him, persecuted for his opinions, the zeal with which he espoused his cause was not merely the result of affection for his friend, or love of his views. To Arnold it recalled the innumerable parallels of the past. He saw in Hampden's judges a resurrection of the spirit which had presided in many a council like that of Constance. All the past persecution of opinion rose like a phantom before his mind's eye. Thus does the historian write the present and the past, by the analogy of principles; yet between the name of Huss and Hampden how little resemblance! Between the opinions of the two men how wide a difference!

These are the internal laws of memory—universal laws; the laws of suggestion.

Now, M. Zaba has invented a plan by which he proposes to assist memory by its own laws: a species of *memoria technica*, or artificial memory.

Its principles, as far as I collected from a hasty sketch he gave me, are twofold:—

1. It relies upon the additional aid furnished to mental memory by the eye. The importance of this aid all know who have studied history with or without a map. In the latter case memory will simply depend on the association of juxtaposition. Events and words followed one another in a certain order. If your verbal or your contiguous memory be tenacious, you may retain the circumstances; but if not, all you recollect will be confused. But if you call

in the aid of eyesight, localising this battle there, and tracing that invasion from town to town, you have got a local habitation as well as a name for your facts—the map is transferred to the inward eye.

Or you might skim over unobservantly the account of the locality of the birth of the first Prince of Wales; but if you had stood in the chamber in Carnarvon Castle where the event took place, it would be engraven there for life; or, if you had seen the axe or block in the Tower on which some historical personage suffered, how much more vivid would your recollection of his fate become!

It is a passage often quoted from an ancient poet, that objects presented to the eye stimulate the attention and the mind far more keenly than those which are merely offered to the ear or the intellect.

M. Zaba's system maps out, as you see, all the past, localising every event; and so you have in its proper shelf, or pigeon-hole, all that you would remember.

2. The next principle which he has summoned to his aid is that of method.

Now, without method memory is useless. Detached facts are practically valueless. All public speakers know the value of method. Persons not accustomed to it imagine that a speech is learnt by heart. Knowing a little about the matter, I will venture to say that if any one attempted that plan, either he must have a marvellous memory, or else he would break down three times out of five. It simply depends upon correct arrangement. The words and sentences are left to the moment; the thoughts methodised beforehand: and the words, if the thoughts are rightly arranged, will place themselves.

But upon the truthfulness of the arrangement all depends. Sometimes a man will find that his divisions have been artificial, and not natural. A thought is put down under a certain head, but there is no reason why it had not been in an earlier division. It belongs to both—a sure proof that the division has been false and confused. Then,

in speaking, perhaps it suggests itself under the first head; and when he comes to the one where it was to have been, there is a gap, and he stumbles and blunders.

Artificial arrangement must rest on a real and natural basis, or else it will be only partially useful. Dr. Whewell, in his pamphlet—which forms one of a series delivered at the suggestion of Prince Albert, on the different departments of the Great Exhibition—shows in a very interesting way how real and *natural* the arrangement of the Exhibition was; how perfectly successful in consequence; and how they gradually fell into the natural arrangement, after former Exhibitions had step by step corrected the mistakes of a more arbitrary and artificial division.

Now, the practicability and value of M. Zaba's scheme will mainly depend upon the question whether his method is simply artificial, or whether the arbitrary division rests upon the natural reason. For instance, each year is divided into nine compartments—one representing a sovereign; a second, revolution; a third, invention, and so on. I invite him to explain this. Nine is an artificial number. Do nine particulars exhaust the chief subjects that are memorable? Do they interfere with each other? &c., &c.

One thing more. I trust he will recollect the difference between the English and the Polish intellect. Our national character excels in perseverance; theirs in talent. They can learn many languages with facility. A friend—I may call him such—of my own, a Pole, had extraordinary faculties of this kind. He told me all his countrymen shared it. The name of Count Streleccki is known to some of you. His talent is multifarious—universal. From the colonial capacities of Australia to the diameter of an extinct crater in one of the Polynesian islands, from the details of an Irish poor-law to the chemical composition of malachite, he is at home in all departments of literature and science. M. Zaba's son, a most intelligent young gentleman—has exhibited wonderful knowledge. But I ask

—he has had experience—how far is the system applicable to our obtuse and low English intellects? How long will an Anglo-Saxon boy be occupied in mastering the system?

CXXXIII.

Last night I began Margaret Fuller Ossoli. The reviews had prejudiced me against her by most unfair extracts, which give no idea whatever of her character as a whole; and it is only one more out of many lessons to judge for one's self, and not to accept the offices of a taster. I got through the first volume almost before I went to bed. I was much pleased: 'an exceedingly rich nature—growing weeds luxuriantly, but fewer than might have been expected. At the commencement are some remarkably well-put observations respecting the hackneyed subject of the Greeks and Romans; but I agree with one of the editors in what he says about being 'almost' Christian. For self-development is not the aim of Christianity, much higher though it be than ordinary paganism, and better too than Evangelicalism, which does not mean quite so much by its watchword, 'Save your own soul.'

Old friends are quite as easy to put off as old gloves, but not quite so easy to draw on again—they have been damped, dried, and cannot open themselves as largely as before. How few can, like Margaret Ossoli, keep the threads of many acquaintances and friendships in the hand, without breaking any, or entangling any? I have begun the third volume—her 'Residence in Europe:' in the first pages are some beautiful passages; but her 'Residence in Paris' rather startles and revolts me. The words 'noble,' 'good,' &c., &c., which she bestows upon that profligate and licentious George Sand, are profanation. What are they worth if they are given indiscriminately? Paris seems to warp and injure every spirit that comes within its unnatural atmosphere. It is the natural birthplace of Phædras and Pasi-phæes, and all that is refinedly brutal. My

beau-ideal of a devil, or rather imp nature, is a Parisian woman, thoroughly refined and thoroughly corrupted. And I knew one or two who were admirable approximations. . . .

CXXXIV.

I have nearly read through Latham on the 'English Language,' a tough book; and also his 'English Grammar.' I have begun them again, in the way of slow and patient study. Once master of the subject, I shall be able to teach it. The great mistake in teaching, is to suppose that, in order to teach elements, only rudimentary knowledge is required. I believe the foundations must have been *approfondis*; not that such teaching need be deep, but it must rest on depths. Results are for production and the public; but it may cost years to get the freedom of stroke which passes for an off-hand inspiration of the moment; and long familiarity with a subject is the only condition on which facility of expression, abundance of illustration, and power of connecting the smallest parts with principles and with the whole, can be obtained.

I have resolved to master Latham, Physical Geography, and Wallenstein, before I leave for Ireland; also to get through the visiting of my congregation. It is always a good plan to fix definite periods for completing work, else it drags on uncompleted for months, perhaps for ever. This, with my other work, will be all that I can manage, for I am no longer able to read hard. I sat up late two nights ago, and am suffering from it still.

How admirable those extracts are which you quote from Margaret F. Ossoli's 'Life'! I agree with what she says about diffuseness in giving out an idea. I am sure the opposite has been my fault, and caused much to fall to the ground inoperatively. I am trying to get over it, and will yet more.

CXXXV.

It is now nearly midnight—the only

enjoyable time for writing, thought, or contemplation during this intense heat. By the side of a wall with a southern aspect the heat is of tropical sultriness, the sunbeams striking off almost as in the focus of a convex glass, and you look along the stones expecting to see the lizards basking in numbers as in the South of Europe. Several persons, I am told, have fallen dead in the open field: yet, severe as it is here, they say it is much worse inland, for during some hours of the day we have a refreshing sea-breeze. Indeed, I am speaking more of others' feelings than my own, for to me the intensest heat is always delightful. At this moment sheet-lightnings are, from time to time, transforming a very dark sky into a brilliant sheet of fire.

What you remark about Margaret Ossoli's 'Life' is quite true. I think there is an apparent decline in power and intellect during her stay in Italy; but then it is to be remembered, in the first place, that the painful and stirring scenes of war and revolution in which she was called to act, called out the woman's heart more than the brain, and the sad realities of the hospital dulled all inclination to soar into realms of speculation, philosophy, and past history. What was the question of 'woman's future position' side by side with splints and bandages, and all things apparently going backwards? Then, in the second place, we must not forget that the whole of her papers concerning Italy were lost in the shipwreck, and in them alone could we expect her intellectual powers to have found a field. It is a life suggestive of much, and that not all pleasing. There is much out of joint in the body social and politic; say rather in our own hearts.

I have received a letter from an intelligent lady, which, I confess, pained me. In reply, I told her there was one thing of which she could not deprive me—the certainty of having done her much good; that having listened for years with reliance and trust, the truths of feeling and life which I have taught must have mixed with

her life—cannot be separated from her being—must grow and produce a harvest which I shall claim hereafter as my harvest, and of which no power in the universe can rob me. I briefly explained her misconception of my views, telling her that the difference between them and those of the party whose views she expounds does not lie in the question of the Atonement—we agree in this—but in the question, *what* in that atonement was the element that satisfied God? They say, pain. I say, because I think the Scriptures say so, the surrender of self-will, as is clearly and distinctly asserted in John x. 17: and also in Hebrews x. 5, 6, 7, 10, where the distinction is drawn between the sacrifices of blood and suffering, which were mere butchery, and the Sacrifice which atones, in this special point, that one is moral, an act of 'WILL'—the other un-moral, merely physical, and therefore worthless. Indeed, this is the whole argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and a glorious one it is. But I strongly recommended her to persevere in her resolve to quit Trinity, since it is not views which mould character, but a spirit; since our mysterious being is only capable of being stirred by the higher springs of action, trust, reliance, reverence, love; and when trust is gone, neither wisdom nor truth from the lips of a teacher can avail anything.

However, as a specimen of a class, the circumstance pained me. How long will the rest remain? Only until they clearly comprehend what I surely try to make plain as my meaning; then I shall be alone, as I expected years ago. Still, this desertion one by one is painful.

Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land?
All fear, none aid you, and few understand.

Well, all the dearer will be the true and few who remain. So it was with Him.

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel.

Wise, profound Shakspeare'

CXXXVI.

MY DEAR —,—Receive all grateful thanks for your nice list, nearly all of which I have already selected for my brother, and sent by this day's post. I feel bound in honour to make the *amende honorable* for my hasty acceptance of the verdict of reviews on Margaret Fuller Ossoli, and acknowledge that she was a noble creature, and that I have read her life with increasing depth of interest, with respect, admiration, and—no! not with tears, but—a certain moisture on the eyelids, the result of reading by a bad light, or too long, or too late—nothing else! I honour her because she was not a man, and could not have been if she had tried; nor a blue, but a woman, whose brain was all heart, and who fulfilled her mission of the friend, and her more sacred mission of the comforter, right nobly. There—I was wrong, and you can make as ungenerous a use of the acknowledgment as you can—that is, as you have it in you to make; which is a moral inability. But it only corroborates my convictions on the general subject. Margaret never looked at one single subject from the point of view from which a man would have contemplated it, and her high-sounding abstractions only veiled her intense belief in and love of living personalities. She was a splendid proof of 'how divine a thing a woman may be made.'

CXXXVII.

The poor ignorant Roman Catholics, are they to be taught their duty by leaving them to the priests, or by living among them and showing them who are their true friends? There is a fearful debt due to Ireland which has been accumulating for centuries, through absenteeism and landlords whose interests have been in England, and not in Ireland. By the unalterable law of retribution it has all come on this generation; and the way to perpetuate it with ever-accumulating interest on the

next generation is to pursue the same old false vicious system which has made Ireland what she is.

As to the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill, nothing has altered my opinion. The old system was monstrous, and the Act was only one of justice. Roman Catholics in France are more attached to their country than to the Papacy, and so they are in Germany. But the mad Orange system, which would wean the affections of a persecuted and unprivileged Roman Catholic from his country and fix them on Rome—banish them from Maynooth to be educated at St. Omer or other foreign seminaries—forces him to be an Ultramontane. I earnestly trust England will never pause, much less retrograde, in the path of fairness and justice on which she has entered. No doubt many immediate consequences will seem bad, but trust to principle and time. Stockport riots, ferocious altarpieces—what do they come from but Ecclesiastical Titles Bills and proclamations against Roman Catholic worship? No; the old 'root-and-branch' system of extermination must either be done thoroughly, or else you must not exasperate a foe whom you have not crippled. Extermination is possible. It succeeded in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But, then, it must be thorough, with fire and sword, and banishment. If not, there is nothing left but the concession of full political privileges. Make them Britons before you attempt to make them Protestants: once Britons, half the venom of their Romanism will be extracted. And then secular education is your sure ally to do the rest—sure and safe, because it does not attack their religion directly, and you will have the people on your side against the priests as in the Thurley affair.

What appals me is to see the way in which people, once liberal, are now recoiling from their own principles, terrified by the state of the Continent, and saying we must stem the tide of democracy, and therefore support the Conservatives. Why,

what has ever made democracy dangerous but Conservatism? French revolutions—socialism—why, people really seem to forget that these things came out of Toryism, which forced the people into madness. What makes rivers and canals overflow?—deep channels cut ever deeper, or dams put across by wise people to stop them?

CXXXVIII.

It is only one hour or two since I left Lewes, the work of the assize being over, and to me it was rather a wearisome work. Yet I do not regret having had this office this year, for it has given me an insight into criminal court practice, which I never should have had but for this occasion, for nothing else would have compelled me to sit twice for four or five days together through every case. The general result of my experience is, that although Burke says, 'The whole end and aim of legislation is to get twelve men into a jury-box,' yet the jury system, beautiful as it is in theory, is in itself neither good nor bad, but depends upon two things—first, the national character; secondly, the judge; and on this last almost entirely. The chief justice, Sir John Jervis, was the criminal judge this time, and his charges to the jury surpassed in brilliance, clearness, interest, and conciseness anything I ever could have conceived. The dullest cases became interesting directly he began to speak—the most intricate and bewildered clear. I do not think above one verdict was questionable in the whole thirty-six cases which he tried. One was a very curious one, in which a young man of large property had been fleeced by a gang of blacklegs on the turf, and at cards. Nothing could exceed the masterly way in which Sir John Jervis untwined the web of sophistries with which a very clever counsel had bewildered the jury. A private note-book, with initials for names, and complicated gambling accounts, was found on one of the prisoners. No one seemed to be able to make head or tail of it. The chief justice looked it over

and most ingeniously explained it all to the jury. Then there was a pack of cards which had been pronounced by the London detectives to be a perfectly fair pack. They were examined in court; every one thought them to be so, and no stress was laid upon the circumstance. However, they were handed to the chief justice. I saw his keen eye glance very inquiringly over them while the evidence was going on. However, he said nothing, and quietly put them aside. When the trial was over and the charge began, he went over all the circumstances till he got to the objects found upon the prisoners. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I will engage to tell you, without looking at the faces, the name of every card upon this pack.' A strong exclamation of surprise went through the court. The prisoners looked aghast. He then pointed out that on the backs, which were figured with wreaths and flowers in dotted lines all over, there was a small flower in the right-hand corner of each like this:—

The number of dots in this flower was the same on all the kings, and so on, in every card through the pack. A knave would be perhaps marked thus:—..... An ace thus—'. and so on; the difference being so slight, and the flowers on the back so many, that even if you had been told the general principle, it would have taken a considerable time to find out which was the particular flower which differed. He told me afterwards that he recollected a similar expedient in Lord De Ros's case, and therefore set to work to discover the trick. But he did it while the evidence was going on, which he himself had to take down in writing.

Another thing he did very well. A man was robbed. Among the coins he had was a sou, a Portsea token, and another, the name of which I forget—a sort of half-penny. A man was taken up on suspicion, and in his pocket, with some other money, were three such coins. The prosecutor could only swear that he had had three such. He could not identify, nor could

he swear to any of the other pieces. The counsel for the defence proved in evidence that all these coins are extremely common in Brighton, where the robbery took place, and the case seemed to have broken down, by the countenances of the jury. 'Gentlemen,' said the Chief Justice, 'the question has to be tried by the doctrine of chances. The sou is common, the token is common, and the third coin too. The chances are, that perhaps a thousand sours are in the pockets of different people in Brighton; that five hundred tokens are so too, and perhaps fifteen hundred of the other; but the chances are very great against two men in Brighton having each a sou and a token, and almost infinite against two men having each in his pocket at the same time a sou, a token, and the third coin. You must, therefore, add this to the rest of the evidence, not as a weak link, but as a very strong one.'

My sermon was from John vii. 17, not the one I had intended to take, as I meant to preach from John xviii. 38—'What is truth?' but I did not feel up to it. I therefore took the old one, and considerably improved as a composition, leaving the main features unaltered, and it forms a very good sequence to the sermon at the first assizes.

CXXXIX.

July 30.

This week has been spent in visiting my people, all of whom I hope to see before I leave Brighton.

Mr. V— dined with me yesterday, and the day before. I was in very good spirits: I walked home with him by the soft light of a most lovely moon, and thought I had never seen the silver flood on the sea more tender in its lustre—the sound of the waves was more plangent than usual.

Martineau's views about Inspiration I think, on the whole, correct. He would not, I presume, deny that artistic power, &c., can be called in a sense inspiration;

but he rightly draws a distinction between that kind of power and the power to which we, by common consent, chiefly consign the word. All power is from God. In the Epistle to the Corinthians, the gifts of the Spirit take in healing, &c., as in the Old Testament Bezaleel and Aholiab are said to be taught by God. In opposition to such as limit to spiritual truth the results of Divine agency, it appears to be important to assert the great truth, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above;' but, then, I do think that those who have most volubly reasserted this forgotten truth have been in danger of levelling these gifts of the intellect with the moral gifts of character. Both come from God, and therefore they assume that both are equally Divine, which is as fallacious as to say, God created men and worms, and therefore worms are equal to men. To assert that the sphere of the Divinest is in moral gifts, is almost identical with Christianity; to assert that the Divine is only in them, is an exaggeration dangerous and false. About a year ago, I strongly urged this distinction on a man of some ability, who published a little *brochure* on the Prophets—a working-man—and made him insert it in his preface to correct the tendency of his book in the other direction. Did I not give you one with a dedication to myself?

One of Carlyle's faults, as it seems to me, is this very tendency to see the Divine everywhere, and to make little distinction between the amount of Divinity which is contained in different forces, provided only that they be Force. Now the prophetic power, in which I suppose is chiefly exhibited that which we mean by inspiration, depends almost entirely on moral greatness. The prophet discerned large principles true for all time—principles social, political, ecclesiastical, and principles of life—chiefly by largeness of heart and sympathy of spirit with God's spirit. That is my conception of inspiration. Much that Theodore Parker says is very valuable, though I am of opinion that Mar-

tineau has, with much sagacity and subtlety, corrected in that review certain expressions which are too unguarded, and which, unless modified, are untrue. 'My judgment is just because I seek not my own will, but the Will of Him that sent me'; that is the very canon of inspiration. Sometimes I feel inclined to write a treatise on the subject; but then indolence, hopelessness, and self-distrust come in the way and nip the resolve in the bud, or, rather, nip it before it sets into resolve.

CXL.

The Apostles lived in anticipation of an immediate end of the world, no doubt; but I cannot see that this, on the whole, was anything but good. It was this which drew the Christians so closely together—made their union so remarkable, and startled the world, to which, otherwise, the new religion would have appeared merely a Philosophy, and not a Life. Besides, are we sure that aught less strong than this hope could have detached men so instantly and entirely from the habits of long sin; or that, on natural principles and without a miracle, even the Apostles could have been induced to crowd so much superhuman energy into so small a compass?

I think the great main doctrine of Christ is that Truth is Light, and they who love the light come to it; that wisdom is justified by her children; that the Jews did not hear Him because they were not His sheep; and, therefore, that the Gospel was truth appealing to the heart much more than demonstrable to the senses. Hence, 'If they heard not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they be persuaded' by the most marvellous miracle.

But this did not exclude a secondary kind of proof for a lower kind of mind; see, especially, John xiv. 11, where the two kinds of proofs are given, and one subordinated to the other. It is quite consistent with God's wisdom to reveal Himself to the senses as well as the soul; and if the Gospel were utterly deficient in this

latter kind of proof, one great evidence that it is from God would be wanting—an evidence which we are justified in expecting from the analogies of nature. God has written His glory, for instance, in the heart; at the same time, He has so constructed the visible universe that 'the heavens declare the glory of God.' And when the Eternal Word is manifested into the world, we naturally expect that Divine power shall be shown as well as Divine beneficence. Miracles, therefore, are exactly what we should expect, and I acknowledge, a great corroboration and verification of His claims to Sonship. Besides, they startled and aroused many to His claims who otherwise would not have attended to them. Still the great truth remains untouched, that they, appealing only to the natural man, cannot convey the spiritual certainty of truth which the spiritual man alone apprehends. However, as the natural and spiritual in us are both from God, why should not God have spoken both to the natural and spiritual part of us; and why should not Christ appeal to the natural works, subordinate always to the spiritual self-evidence of Truth itself?

You say, 'St. Paul appeals in the Romans to Divine sovereignty and might, and does it not prove that Might makes Right, and that it is right to act thus, and thus only, because the Supreme Power has willed it?' Not at all. The spirit of the sentence seems to me only that of another expression of his, 'Let God be true and every man a liar.' It is a reply to some one finding fault captiously with the constitution of things, and asking the reason why higher privileges, &c., are not given. And to this it is enough to say, 'God has willed.' But St. Paul takes for granted all through that the will is a holy will. Suppose two children disputing about a fact or a principle; one argues and disputes, the other cuts the whole matter short by saying, 'I know it is so—papa said so.' Could we justly infer that that

child considered its father's word to be the origin of truth, and enough to establish it, though it had not existed before? No: but it only takes for granted, from its father's known veracity, that the questionable matter must be so in spite of all appearances against it. Yet, as its expression is loosely worded, in reply only to a particular argument, an acute metaphysician, who was determined to extract metaphysics out of a child's argument, might easily make such a view appear to be unconsciously the child's view of truth. Now St. Paul, I believe, wrote in the same way. He is not dealing in any way with the metaphysical question of the foundation of Right, but only with the popular Jewish question, 'What right have the Gentiles to the Messiah?—what claim have they to be chosen instead of the Jews?' He says, 'Nay; but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' God has a right to do what He will with His creatures. But, observe, he never assumes or implies that God has a right to create moral evil; that simply does not enter into his conception, and would have been horrible and shocking to him.

The Inspiration of the Bible is a large subject. I hold it to be inspired, not dictated. It is the word of God—the words of man: as the former, perfect; as the latter, imperfect. God the Spirit, as the Sanctifier, does not produce absolute perfection of human character; God the Spirit, as an Inspirer, does not produce absolute perfection of human knowledge; and for the same reason in both cases—the human element which is mixed up—else there could have been no progressive dispensations. Let us take the case—the history of the creation. Now, I hold that a spiritual revelation from God *must* involve scientific incorrectness; it could not be from God unless it did. Suppose that the cosmogony had been given in terms which would satisfy our present scientific knowledge, or, say, rather the terms of absolute scientific truth: It is plain that, in this

case, the men of that day would have rejected its authority: they would have said, 'Here is a man who tells us the earth goes round the sun: and the sky, which we see to be a stereoma fixed and not far up, is infinite space, with no *firmament* at all, and so on. Can we trust one in matters unseen who is manifestly in error in things seen and level to the senses? Can we accept his revelation about God's nature and man's duty, when he is wrong in things like these?' Thus, the faith of this and subsequent ages must have been purchased at the expense of the unbelief of all previous ages. I hold it, therefore, as a proof of inspiration of the Bible, and divinely wise, to have given a spiritual revelation, *i.e.*, a revelation concerning the truths of the soul and its relation to God, in popular and incorrect language. Do not mistake that word incorrect: incorrect is one thing, false another. It is scientifically incorrect to say that the sun rose this morning; but it is not false, because it conveys all that is required, for the nonce, to be known about the fact, time, &c. And if God were giving a revelation in this present day, He would give it in modern phraseology, and the men He inspired would talk of sunrise, sunset, &c. Men of science smile at the futile attempts to reconcile Moses and geology. I give up the attempt at once, and say, the inspiration of the Bible remains intact for all that—nay, it would not have been inspired, except on this condition of incorrectness.

Neologianism is a large word, and embraces an almost endless variety of views; but to be candid, I look upon Bibliolatry with quite as much dislike as Arnold did—as pernicious, dangerous to true views of God and His revelation to the human race, and the cause of much bitter Protestant Popery, or claims to infallibility of interpretation, which nearly every party puts forth. I believe Bibliolatry to be as superstitious, as false, and almost as dangerous as Romanism.

Men try, you say, to find resting-places

for Faith in Reason, rather than for Reason in Faith. If there has been a single principle which I have taught more emphatically than any other, it is that not by reason—meaning, by reason, the understanding—but by the spirit, that is, the heart, trained in meekness and love by God's Spirit, truth can be judged of at all. I hold that the attempt to rest Christianity upon miracles and fulfilments of prophecy is essentially the vilest rationalism; as if the trained intellect of a lawyer, which can investigate evidence, were that to which is trusted the soul's salvation; or, as if the evidence of the senses were more sure than the intuitions of the spirit to which spiritual truths almost *alone* appeal. It is not in words (though they are constant), but in the deepest convictions and first principles of my soul, that I feel the failure of intellect in this matter. Indeed, the common complaint against me is, that I make too little of the proofs addressed to the understanding. I complain of Evangelicalism because it tries to explain the Atonement by Reason—a debtor's and creditor's account. As to the desire after breadth and comprehension, that I confess. I am sick of hatred, suspicion, slander, and condemnation of one another, and long to believe in men's good rather than in their evil, in God rather than in the devil. I believe I hold 'the distinctive features of my religion' sharply enough, too sharply for a great many people; but I cannot and will not judge those who do not hold them as I do; nay, I go further, I will not cease trying to love them, and believing that, under other words, they often express the truths that I hold most dear. To the question, Who is my neighbour? I reply, as my Master did, by the example that He gave, 'The alien and the heretic.' And I do not think that He will say my charity is too large, or my inclusiveness too great. Alas! alas! when I see Romanists cursing the Church of England, Evangelicals shaking their heads about the Christianity of Tractarians, Tractarians banning Dissenters,

Dissenters anathematising Unitarians, and Unitarians of the old school condemning the more spiritual ones of the new; I am forced to hope that there is more inclusiveness in the Love of God than in the bitter orthodoxy of sects and churches. I find only two classes who roused His Divine indignation when on earth: those who excluded bitterly—the Scribes, and those of a religious name—the popular religious party of the day, who judged frailty and error bitterly—the Pharisees. I am certain that I do not ‘dilute’ truth, at least what I count truth, nor hold lax views about opinions; but I am certain that men are often better than their creed, and that our Lord’s mode of judging of the tree by its fruits is the only true one.

CXLI.

Your welcome letter reached me safely yesterday afternoon, surrounded with business. The calmness of weather of which you speak did not extend to the Irish Channel, for it was blowing hard out of harbour, and, besides, the effects of the late gales remained upon the surface of the sea, which was like a boiling cauldron. I never felt so ill at sea in my life. I sent off a telegraphic despatch to B—to say I should probably not be at home on Sunday, but I afterwards resolved to overcome the weakness, and reached London just in time.

I feel already the lack of severe exercise—the only remedy for excitable nerves. On my way in the train I purchased and partly read Prescott’s articles, collected from the *North American Review*. They are good, but not so much out of the common as I expected. Indeed, except for the refreshing character of everything American, which is young and not *blasé*, like European literature, I should say they are not above par; but the above peculiarity makes all that comes from the New World interesting. How devoutly it is to be hoped that, in the coming conflict of the nations, America and Eng-

land will stand side by side, instead of opposite; for, if not, it will be all over with the cause of liberty, for some centuries at least. The conqueror in the strife will be then a military power, and must perforce crush the peoples under a tyranny. And as to a universal war, that is inevitable, and in every direction men’s minds are foreboding it—a very strange symptom of the times to be so prevalent long before a single *casus belli* has made its appearance. It is one of those mysterious phenomena which plunge you into the deep question of Prophecy—what it is in our human nature, and how and why it works. At present this anticipation resembles the inexplicable awe and sense of coming danger which makes the dumb unreasoning cattle restless at the approach of a thunder-storm. I am told that the Ministry are full of apprehensions, and that even the late Cabinet would have taken much more decisive measures but for their fear of that infatuated Manchester Peace school. Strange, that people with so much to lose in case of war should be so blindly unwilling to pay in the present for the means of peace!

I mean to work very hard soon at Wordsworth, his life, principles, and poetry—a large subject.

Another most strange thing: a young man has been longing only to live until my return. ‘When will Mr. Robertson be back? I must hear his voice again.’ He is dying; and a lady has been waiting in the same way—a Mrs. — saw me at 9 A.M. yesterday, and died at six. I must not, and ought not, to regret that I did not stay.

CXLII.

There is an old friend of mine whose income does not exceed 2,000*l.*, and whose charities are at least 1,200*l.* annually. Certainly, with examples such as hers, and comparing what most of us spend upon ourselves, it does seem the very acme of effrontery and impudence to

call ourselves Christians. A young gentleman's cigars, or a young lady's ribands, would save a human creature's life, and make ten happy. I am tempted sometimes to resolve I will never again suffer the word Self-sacrifice to pass my lips, which now so often and so smoothly runs from them, and that I will not suffer it to fall unchallenged from the lips of others. In Christ's day people used similar unmeaning sentimentalisms, but He always took them up, as it were, and forced them to weigh the meaning of their words: as, for instance, to the woman who came out with a fine piece of sentiment, 'Blessed is the womb that bare Thee,' He replied, 'Yea, rather, blessed are they who know the word of God and keep it;' and to the man who said, 'Blessed is he that shall eat meat in the kingdom of God,' He spoke forthwith the Parable of the Wedding Guest Expelled, with the obvious application—'Yes, true enough, but do you know *how* true what you say is "Blessed," for many shall *not eat* bread in that kingdom?'

CXLIII.

There are some persons whose language respecting Ireland is positively unchristian, and only to be paralleled by the tone used of the *canaille* by the French nobles just before the terrible retribution of the Revolution. Women are taught history in a way that is utterly useless and unpractical, else the past wrongs of Ireland would for ever haunt them, and the present squalidness, beggary, and demoralisation would conjure up a hideous picture of the past, and, reminding of the law of retribution, tie the tongue when it was inclined to abuse. What are the antecedents of the present state of things? At whose door must the guilt lie, but at that of the ancestors of those who now inherit the soil? But French revolutions teach nobody! And the study of the history of bees and ants would do people, I verily believe, as much good as the study of human history. So with

the Jews of old: they were very weather-wise, but could not read 'the signs of the times.' Jewish ladies were a good deal surprised when they found themselves sold as slaves to Romish voluptuaries; and Parisian ladies were equally astonished when, having spent such enormous sums on their *coiffures* and ribbons, they one fine day found their head-dress arraigned for them at the national expense, *à la guillotine*. Jewish prophets reminded people pretty clearly of what had been, and Isaiah went somewhat minutely into the expenditure of the Jewish ladies on their pretty persons, while the cause of the widow and fatherless was uncared for; but they laughed at him till he became importunate, and then they thought it *un peu trop fort*, and poor Isaiah was sawn in two, and he bothered them no longer about their 'chains,' and their 'bracelets,' and their 'mufflers,' their 'changeable suits of apparel,' the 'glasses' and the 'fine linens,' the 'hoods' and the 'veils.' I wonder what they thought when Nebuchadnezzar invaded the country and their own *canaille* betrayed them to the conqueror! Do not give way to impatience about poor Ireland; likely enough Mr. C—— may have failed partially. Why, God's own Son failed—and if, after His failures with you and me, He were to give us up as incorrigible, I wonder where we should be to-morrow. And yet we think a few charitable efforts are to succeed at once, and undo the accumulated vice of years. I knew a young lady whose views on this subject were the most *naïves* I ever heard. She went down once to —, and lectured the poor wretches upon their dirt and uncomfortable habits and houses, and—hear it, earth and heaven!—they did not repent them of their evil ways, and reform at the voice of that angelic visitation. It is just possible that, never having *seen* cleanliness or comfort, they did not know *what* she wanted them to aim at, or *how* to begin. Mrs. Fry would have bought them a bit of soap, and washed a child's fingers with her own

hands as a specimen, and drawn out a little set of rules, and paraded the family once a week, half in fun and good-humouredly, to see that her orders were obeyed; and she would have gone on for a year, and if at the end of a year she saw a little dawn of improvement, she would have thanked God and taken courage. But fine young ladies think that an eloquent cut of a riding-wip through the air in the last Belgravian fashion is to electrify a Celtic village, and convert a whole population of savages to civilised tastes and English habits.

The patient drudgery of love which does God's work, however, is not learned in Belgravia. Well, the aristocracy of the next world will be the Frys, and the Chisholms, and the people who do not care for being smart, and are not afraid, like their Master, 'to lay their hands' upon the wretches whom they would rescue. I do not know that anything in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' struck me so much as that remark!—it was one of those which are suggestive of worlds of thought, and send a whole flood of light into a subject.

Mr. C——, you say, has spent his life on his property, trying to ameliorate, &c., and he has failed. 'Well,' as Lord Carlisle said, 'Heaven is for those who have failed on earth'—failed *so*. Is Mr. C——, disgusted with ingratitude, going to throw up all, and give himself up to a life of pleasure? Well, quote to him, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not the things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.' Quote to him, 'Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought the better fight, who singly hast maintained.' Quote to him, 'Into whatever house ye enter, salute that house; and if the son of peace be there, your blessing shall remain; if not, it shall return to you again.'

In the moments when life presents itself to me in its true solemn aspect, I feel that I would rather be the author of such a failure than of all the success and glory of Wellington; and I suspect one or two

more will think so in the Day of Judgment.

You wonder at my wish to go to the war at the Cape. I think it is because my feeling of life is antagonism rather than tenderness. I suppose to see, in visible flesh and blood, that which I might legitimately call my foe, would be a relief from that vague sense of invisible opposition with which my life is encompassed. No doubt the true end to which this feeling is meant to conduct is hostility to Evil; but Evil in the abstract is so hard to hate that we are for ever identifying it with the concrete, and longing to grapple with it in a form. Such, I suppose, is the true interpretation of the Psalms, where so much hatred is expended on God's enemies—meaning men—and which modern writers have rightly spiritualised, though on most loose and inconsistent principles. They take Moab and Ammon and Babylon to mean certain modern persons or principles, feeling that, taken literally, the spirit of denunciation is irreligious. But the Psalmists did not mean this. David and others meant Moab, &c.; but that which was true in their feeling was the human indignation against the Evil in Moab and Ammon, which they could not separate in idea from them. It is this, stripped of the local, transitory, and Jewish form in which it appears, which is everlastingly true: in other words, the prophetic spirit. And as such, to say that, transferred to our times, our Babylon, our Ammon, are such-and-such evils, is perfectly true, and to hate them is the real essence of the lesson of those Psalms, and is that which is true and eternal in them. All this out of my instinctive love of war!

I sat with the S——s for half an hour two days ago, just after the sublimest and most wonderful sunset I ever saw in my life. S. T. quite agreed that it was so. A mighty mass of blood-red crimson, mottled richly with gold, spread over the whole west, miles broad and many degrees high. In this were lakes of purest green, like that of the lakes of Switzerland. It was start-

ling from its mass and majesty. Turning a corner, I came on it suddenly, and absolutely gasped for a moment.

CXLIV.

To-morrow is the funeral of the Great Duke. I do not think I shall go up, though I am tempted by the thought that it might be an impression for life for Charlie. Old England has departed for once from her habit of unostentatious funerals, and I am not one who think that in this case she has done unwisely: to bury the Duke as common greatness is buried would be out of place. Such men take a century to grow, and we cannot have another such in this generation. If you could find a man equal in genius, you could not have the tried of eighty years until eighty years are gone. This old, dull country which the filigree nations laugh at, with her inconsistencies and her prejudices, how sound at heart she is in the way she does her hero-worship, and what unique heroes hers are!—Duty, the watchword of Nelson and Wellington—the last sublime battle-cry of the one and long life-law of the other—and no splash nor dash nor French theatricals about either of them.

His long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.

Tennyson has put it all into one pregnant line. Nelson, Adelaide, Wellington—these have been the *great* mournings of England in this century; and Peel, because men thought there was a sacrifice in him too, in his degree. Yes, Goodness, Duty, Sacrifice—these are the qualities that England honours. She gapes and wonders every now and then, like an awkward peasant, at some other things—railway kings, electro-biology, and other trumperies—but nothing stirs her grand old heart down to its central deeps universally and long except the Right. She puts on her shawl very badly, and she is awkward enough in a concert-room, scarcely knowing a Swedish nightingale from a jackdaw; but—blessings large and long upon her!—

she knows how to teach her sons to sink like men amongst sharks and billows, without parade, without display, as if duty were the most natural thing in the world, and she never mistakes long an actor for a hero or a hero for an actor. Men like Arnold and Wordsworth she recognises at last—men like Wellington, more visibly right, at once, and with unalterable fidelity. I do love my dear old blundering Country, and I forgive her the few deaths caused at the lying-in-state by her awkwardness and want of experience in spectacles, and with plenary indulgence prospective all the mistakes and even absurdities she will probably be guilty of to-morrow.

Christmas Eve, 1852.

MY DEAR —,—Though I am in haste to get to work, it being Christmas Eve, I will not let your note remain unanswered; but I fear it must be done concisely.

And first, let me say that I can deeply appreciate any views which have not egotism for their basis; views like yours, which are earnest and unselfish.

Perhaps I mistake them; but if I do not, the 'greatest happiness' theory seems to lie at the root of them. Now, granting that this is the motive of the Supreme Mind (which I do only for the sake of argument), I believe it cannot be ours, safely, ever. I do not doubt that duty will be found, on the inductions of a very large experience, to coincide with the greatest happiness; but I believe, that if the happiness of others were the motive, duty would often be sacrificed, because we cannot always see its ultimate tendencies; and to do right will sometimes appear the worst for others that can be imagined.

I *entirely* disagree with your conceptions of *His* motives. To do His Father's will, to drink the appointed cup, to submit to a law of the universe, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground,' &c., these were His *motives*; in every form of words He says so. No doubt, at times He speaks as

foreseeing the good which would result ; but never that I know of does He speak of that as His chief motive. Of course, to see that ultimate good and duty coincide makes duty easier, and gave Him comfort and joy ; but in his darker hours the good seemed hidden, and perhaps problematical. I think I cannot be mistaken here. Could you know *how* I have lived in His mind, and tried to understand Him, till comprehension became adoration, you would think so. I am not pretending to a superior appreciation beyond yours—except only on this ground, that professionally forced to the contemplation, and forced more terribly by doubts and difficulties that nearly shattered morals and life, till I was left alone with myself and Him, I am, perhaps, qualified to speak with a decision that would be otherwise dogmatism.

I think you mistook what I said about infinitesimal fractions of harm divided among numbers. What I meant was, that the motive of doing right because of the harm that results from doing wrong would be insufficient in strong temptation ; when the argument would run fairly enough, ' Intense present joy to one individual of the world, at least—myself, and possible harm divided among so many as to be inappreciable by any. Why should I hesitate to enjoy ?'

In the preventive check principle, this is, I think, indisputable. No human being, I suppose, ever abstained from marriage, if *really in love*, on consideration of the results his marriage might hereafter have on the labour market.

And I quite agree with you, the case you put is parallel, that of benevolent actions. When one sees how the noblest schemes fail, or begins to question the results of this

or that act, uncertain whether it will or not produce good, I confess it seems to me that, with this motive only, deep-thinking or sadly-feeling hearts would let all opportunities go by. O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you—how long shall I suffer you ?

But anything, my dear —, to abolish that detestable doctrine which is preached in some evangelical pulpits, that self-happification is the great duty, or, as they call it, saving one's own soul ; which is merely prudence on a large scale, and makes worldly selfishness wrong, only because it is a short-sighted calculation.

Act, if you can, for the general good ; or, rather, think that you act so, for your heart is too feminine and tender to be swayed by abstractions.

To express, in a sentence or two, my feelings :—

God's will : not man's happiness.

Right : not a balance of profit and loss.

God's will, and Right, will eventuate in man's happiness, and in a balance of profit ; but with these things I feel myself unable to grapple.

Do not think I treat your views or arguments lightly. I honour you for them. And, besides, I am inclined to think that I have attacked the tendencies of your views, rather than the views you really hold.

But I have written so hurriedly, that I fear this hasty sketch is not worth sending. May God bless you and teach you—better than I can—and teach me, for I deeply need it, and feel only that truth is infinite, and my guesses at it are few and blundering.

Yours, with most sincere esteem,

F. W. R.

CHAPTER XI.

1853.

Friendship of Mr. Robertson with Lady Byron—State of his Health—Advance of Disease—Sermons of this Year—The Principles which underlie his Teaching—Adoration of the Virgin—Sacrament of the Mass—Purgatory—Apostolical Succession—The Seven Sacraments—Suggestive, not Dogmatic Teaching—The Peace-Maker—Foundation of his Teaching—His Position with regard to Unitarianism—Lecture on Wordsworth—Letter in answer to a Criticism, in which he discloses the loneliness of his Heart—Wordsworth and High Churchism—Letter replying to one of the High-Church Party who urged him to unite himself to them—Increasing Weakness—Visit to Cheltenham—His Congregation offers him a Curate—The Vicar puts a veto on his Choice—Last Sermons preached in Trinity Chapel, May 29, 1853.

DURING the first few months of 1853, Mr. Robertson seems to have been frequently at Esher, where Lady Byron lived. He had known her almost from the time of his arrival at Brighton, and acquaintance soon passed into a deep and lasting friendship. He said of her that she was one of the noblest and purest women he had ever met. 'Her calm subdued character,' he writes, 'warm sympathy, and manifold wisdom have been one of my greatest privileges here.' He heard from her the whole history of her life, and she committed into his hands the charge of publishing, after her decease, her memoirs and letters. This was, to her great regret, frustrated by his death. While he lived he sought her sympathy, and always received it. Her friendship gave him new life, and supplied him with strength to conquer his trials.

And, indeed, he needed at this time both sympathy and assistance. He was almost worn out. His state of health was dangerous in the extreme. The annexed letter, written in January, 1853, is a true account of his condition:—

January 13, 1853.

To-day I have done little. Titus would have written, 'I have lost a day.' I prepared for Sunday with little zest and much lassitude of mind, walked with S—, read

the newspaper, and scarcely anything else besides. It is strange how much more loss I feel in me of life's vital force than a year or two ago; it seems a tortoise existence; the truth of which *simile* you will appreciate, if you remember that the pulse of that creature beats about once to twenty pulsations of our blood, and every function of his nature, walking, &c., is performed in the slowest way, as if existence were dragged out.

Already the disease which slew him began to declare itself plainly. Loss of the old power and of quickness in thinking; the necessity for a laborious exercise of will in order to stimulate thought, and appalling exhaustion after such an effort, were some of the first symptoms. It is sad to see that a change in the day appointed for his lecture on Wordsworth was sufficient to throw him into mental confusion; that his memory, which once could retain for years together the order of his reasoning and thinking on any subject, was now so far enfeebled that the whole work of his lecture had to be done over again. Torturing pains in the back of his head and neck, as if an eagle were rending there with its talons, made life dreadful to him. During Monday, Tuesday, and the greater part of Wednesday in every week he suffered severely. Alone in his room he lay

on the rug, his head resting on the bar of a chair, clenching his teeth to prevent the groans which, even through the sleepless length of solitary nights, the ravaging pain could never draw from his manliness. It is miserable to read, week by week, the records of his advancing illness, and to know that it might have been arrested by the repose which he did not and could not take.

Yet among his discourses of this year are some of the most striking that he ever preached. The sermon on 'The Glory of the Virgin Mother' is as original as it is remarkable for the new method in which he proposed to treat the subjects of controversy between our Church and that of Rome. He intended that it should be the first of a series in which the positive truths underlying the Roman Catholic errors should be brought into clear light. This plan he would have carried out with the help of the two first of the principles which he lays down himself as characteristic of his teaching. I quote the whole of the passage (numbering the principles, for the sake of clearness), as important for a just comprehension of his writings:—

The principles on which I have taught:—

First. The establishment of positive truth, instead of the negative destruction of error. Secondly. That truth is made up of two opposite propositions, and not found in a *via media* between the two. Thirdly. That spiritual truth is discerned by the spirit, instead of intellectually in propositions; and, therefore, Truth should be taught suggestively, not dogmatically. Fourthly. That belief in the Human character of Christ's Humanity must be antecedent to belief in His Divine origin. Fifthly. That Christianity, as its teachers

should, works from the inward to the outward, and not *vice versa*. Sixthly. The soul of goodness in things evil.

On the first of these, the whole of his controversial teaching was founded. By the formula of the second he evolved the positive truth with which he confronted the errors he opposed. The best illustration which can be given of the working of this method is his examination of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the adoration of the Virgin in the sermon mentioned above. A slight note supplies the information that it was his intention to have applied this method of analysis to all the Roman Catholic dogmas. The passage is as follows:—

Purgatory, Mariolatry, Absolution, Apostolical Succession, Seven Sacraments instead of two, Transubstantiation, Baptismal Regeneration, Invocation of Saints—each is based upon a truth; but crystallised into form, petrified into dogmas, they are false. Endeavour to trace the meaning contained in Romish institutions: do not meet them with anathemas. Discover what the Roman Catholic means, translate to him his longing, interpret to him what he wants. I can conceive no more blessed work than this for the man of large heart and clear, vigorous intellect.

The sermons on Baptism and Absolution are also elaborate examples of the way in which he performed this work.

From notes, with which I have been supplied, of conversations with him, other instances of his application of this method are extracted.

On the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, he says:—

In opposition to the Dissenting view, it *is* Christ's body and blood received; in opposition to the Romanists' view, it *is not*

Christ's body and blood to those who receive it unworthily. We do not go between the two. Each of these opposite statements of the Dissenter or of the Roman Catholic are truths, and we retain them. It is not merely bread and wine: it is, spiritually, Christ's body and blood: God present spiritually, not materially, to those who receive it worthily; *i.e.*, to the faithful. It is not Christ's body and blood to those on whose feelings and conduct it does not tell.

It is well known that he went further than this. He held, with our Church, that the Sacrifice of Christ was once offered and no more. But he held also, that ultra-Protestantism missed the truth contained in transubstantiation; that that sacrifice is repeated daily, in a spiritual manner, in the hearts of all faithful people. The Romanist is right in the principle—wrong in his application of the principle. The Sacrifice of Christ is for ever going on, but not in the sacrifice of the Mass.

He met the doctrine of Purgatory as follows:—

The ultra-Protestant utterly denies it. But the law of the universe is progress. Is there no more pain for the redeemed? Is there nothing good in store for the bad? We ask ourselves such questions when we observe the large class of human beings who are neither heavenly nor damnable. We know here that affliction and pain soften some, while they harden others, as heat which softens iron hardens clay. We are told that as men die so they rise. Some few die ripe for the presence of God; others, as in the case of the Pharisees, to whom good appeared only as Satanic evil, need only go on to find, as Milton has expressed it, 'myself is hell.' But, in the case of the first class mentioned, does not analogy make it more than conceivable that their pain should be remedial, not

penal? Here, then, we have the principle of purgatory. I have stated this hypothetically; the Roman Catholic states it as a dogma. Our fate is decided here. This is said rigorously by the ultra-Protestant. *So it is*: there is the Protestant truth. The Romanist states the opposite truth, and says, 'Our destiny is determined beyond the grave.' So long as either is a positive statement of a truth, it is right; but the moment either denies the truth of the other it becomes falsehood.

Mr. Robertson, as may be seen from his instance of the Pharisees, was not a Universalist in doctrine, however he may have hoped that Universalism was true. 'My only difficulty,' he once said to a friend, 'is how not to believe in everlasting punishment.'

With regard to the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, he says, using the principle given above:—

There is an Apostolical Succession. It is not the power of God conveyed by physical contact—it is not a line of priests; it is a succession of prophets—a broken, scattered one, but a real one. John was the successor of Elias' spirit. In the spiritual birth, Luther was the offspring of the mind of St. Paul. Mind acts on mind, whether by ideas or character: herein is the spiritual succession.

He made use of the same principle in speaking of the Romish doctrine of Seven Sacraments:—

The Roman Catholic has seven sacraments; we have but two. We can rise to a higher truth than either. The sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, are representative symbols. One day was set apart to sanctify all time; one tribe to make all the nation holy; one nation to make the whole world the kingdom of God. In this way the race was educated. On the same principle God has

divinely ordained two material acts to represent the truth that all nature is holy when everything in it reveals His sacredness to men: that all acts are holy when done in the spirit of Christ. Water, the simplest element, represents the sacredness and awfulness of all things. By the consecration of the commonest act of life—a meal—every act is made holy. By the extension of these symbols from two to seven, we really limit their meaning—we say that seven *alone* are holy; but when we retain only one *element*, and one *act* as set apart to be holy by Christ, we see in these symbols the statement of two universal truths—that all the material Universe and all acts ought to be holy to the Lord.

This argument, which has been condensed out of many scattered hints, he closes thus:—

The Protestant truth is, that two symbols only are ecclesiastically set apart; the Roman Catholic truth is, that many more than these are channels of Divine communication to our spirits. These two views make up the whole truth. The Protestant falsehood is limiting to these two the grace (here meaning a strong and vivid impression) of God; the Romanist falsehood is the negation of the Protestant truth: these two are not the only ecclesiastical sacraments—there are five more; by which assertion he has got into superstition, and lost the universal meaning of the sacraments.

The third principle of his teaching, that spiritual truth is discerned by the spirit, and not intellectually in propositions, pervades all his writings, and is especially laid down in a sermon preached in this year, 1853, on 'The Good Shepherd,' in a passage beginning, 'The son of Man claims to himself the name of Shepherd,' &c.* He believed that the highest

truths were poetry—to be felt, not proved; resting *ultimately*, not on the authority of the Bible or the Church, but on that witness of God's Spirit in the heart of man which is to be realised, not through the cultivation of the understanding, but by the loving obedience of the heart. Therefore his own personal teaching was suggestive, not dogmatic. He did not choose his text in order to bring a doctrine out of it, but he penetrated to its centre, and seized the principle it contained. It was the kernel, not the shell, for which he cared. He taught no schemes of doctrine. His thoughts could not flow in cut channels, but only like a river, livingly, and 'at their own sweet will.' Owing to this, he never became the leader of a sect or the follower of any religious school. He stood aside from all parties, and yet, standing aside, he was formed to be the reconciler and uniter of parties.

While he sternly denounced moral evil, he was tolerant of intellectual error; while he spoke severely against the bigotry of sects, he conciliated minor differences of opinion. His peculiarly receptive character, which reflected what was good as naturally as a calm lake reflects its shores; his intuitive grasp of truth; his large love, which felt all that was real in men, formed, unconsciously to himself, a common ground where divided parties might unite. Starting from different points, they found a centre in him. They found all that was good in them acknowledged and brought out by him into clearer prominence; and in their satisfaction grew tolerant of the errors and quick to recognise the truths which others taught. For he represented to men not sharp distinct out-

* Vol. ii., pp. 263, 264.

lines of doctrine, but the fulness and depth of the Spirit of Christianity, which, allowing in his view of outward difference of opinion, united men by a pervasive spirit of love to Christ and to one another. He thus became the peacemaker.

This was the great work of his life. But it was hindered and stifled at Brighton by the opposition and the factiousness of his professional brethren, who could neither see the meaning of his life nor the signs of the times. But since his death this aspect of his work has been advancing into prominence. He cannot be claimed especially by any one of our conflicting parties. But all thoughtful men, however divided in opinion, find in his writings a point of contact. He has been made one of God's instruments to preserve the unity of the Christian Church in this country, and to avert the vagrancy of mind and the loss of working power which are the natural results of schism. For, instead of by violent dogmatic teaching promoting mutual rancour, and therefore uselessness, he taught principles which established mutual love, and therefore practical usefulness for Christ. This will be the main result of his life upon this age.

But, though his teaching was more suggestive than dogmatic, he did not shrink from meeting in the pulpit the difficulties involved in many of the doctrines of the English Church. His explanations of the Atonement; of the way in which Christ suffered, being tempted; of the doctrine of sin; of the doctrine of the sacraments; of absolution; of imputed righteousness; of the freedom of the Gospel in contrast to the bondage of the Law—

have solved the difficulties of many. He believed himself that they were true solutions. But he also believed that the time might come when they would cease to be adequate solutions. He recognised that the solution which was fitting for one age might be unfitting for another; that his solutions were perhaps, only grounds for more comprehensive ones. This is another reason why he never founded a school. He would not say, 'My explanations are final,' for he looked forward to an advance of the Christian Church, not into new truths, but into wider or more tolerant views of those old truths which in themselves are incapable of change.

Yet, notwithstanding all this—which men called while he lived, and now when he is dead will call, want of a clear and defined system of theology—he had a fixed basis for his teaching. It was the Divine-human Life of Christ. This is the fourth principle mentioned in his letter, 'that belief in the Human character of Christ must be antecedent to belief in His Divine origin.' He felt that an historical Christianity was absolutely essential; that only through a visible life of the Divineness in the flesh could God become intelligible to men; that Christ was God's idea of our nature realised; that only when we fall back upon the glorious portrait that has been, can we be delivered from despair of Humanity; that in Christ 'all the blood of all the nations ran, and all the powers of man were redeemed.' Therefore he grasped as the highest truth on which to rest life and thought, the reality expressed in the words, 'The Word was made flesh.' The Incarnation was to him the centre of all history, the blossoming of Humanity. The Life which followed the Incarnation was the ex-

planation of the life of God, and the only solution of the problem of the life of man. He did not speak much of loving Christ; his love was fitly mingled with that veneration which makes love perfect; his voice was solemn, and he paused before he spoke His name in common talk; for what that Name meant had become the central thought of his intellect, and the deepest realisation of his spirit. He had spent a world of study, of reverent meditation, of adoring contemplation on the gospel history. Nothing comes forward more visibly in his letters than the way in which he had entered into the human life of Christ. To that everything is referred—by that everything is explained. The gossip of a drawing-room, the tendencies of the time, the religious questions of the day, especially the Sabbath question, the loneliness and the difficulties of his work, were not so much argued upon or combated, as at once and instinctively brought to the test of a Life which was lived out eighteen centuries ago, but which went everywhere with him. Out of this intuitive reception of Christ, and from this ceaseless silence of meditation which makes the blessedness of great love, there grew up in him a deep comprehension of the whole, as well as a minute sympathy with all the delicate details of the character of Christ. Day by day, with passionate imitation, he followed his Master, musing on every action, revolving in thought the inter-dependence of all that Christ had said or done, weaving into the fibres of his heart the principles of the Life he worshipped, till he had received into his being the very impression and image of that unique Personality. His very doc-

trines were the Life of Christ expressed in words. The Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection of Christ were not dogmas to him. In himself he was daily realising them. They were in him a life, a power, a light. This was his Christian consciousness.

Out of this study and reception of the Humanity arose his conviction of the Divinity of Christ.

The following striking passage, from an unpublished sermon, is very characteristic of his teaching on this subject. It establishes a *method* of arriving at a conviction of the Divinity of the Son of Man, which, were it oftener employed, were well. I know one, at least, whom this view has saved from Unitarianism.

Christ was the Son of God. But remember in what sense He ever used this name—Son of God because Son of Man. He claims Sonship in virtue of His Humanity. Now, in the whole previous revelation through the Prophets, &c., one thing was implied—only through man can God be known; only through a perfect man, perfectly revealed. Hence He came, 'the brightness of His Father's Glory, the *express image* of His person.' Christ then must be loved as Son of Man before He can be adored as Son of God. In personal love and adoration of Christ the Christian religion consists, not in correct morality, or in correct doctrines, but in a homage to the King.

Now, unquestionably, the belief in the Divinity of Christ is waning among us. They who hold it have petrified it into a theological dogma without life or warmth, and thoughtful men are more and more beginning to put it aside. How are we then to get back this belief in the Son of God? by authority or by the old way of persecution? The time for these has passed. The other way is to begin at the beginning. Begin as the Bible begins,

with Christ the Son of Man. Begin with Him as God's character revealed under the limitations of humanity. Lay the foundations of a higher faith deeply in a belief of His Humanity. See Him as He was. Breathe His Spirit. After that, try to comprehend His Life. Enter into His Childhood. Feel with Him when He looked round about Him in anger, when He vindicated the crushed woman from the powerless venom of her ferocious accusers;—when he stood alone in the solitary Majesty of Truth in Pilate's judgment-hall; when the light of the Roman soldiers' torches flashed on Kedron in the dark night, and He knew that watching was too late; when His heart-strings gave way upon the Cross. Walk with Him through the Marriage Feast. See how the sick and weary came to Him instinctively; how men, when they saw Him, felt their sin, they knew not why, and fell at His feet; how guilt unconsciously revealed itself, and all that was good in men was drawn out, and they became higher than themselves in His presence. Realise this. Live with Him till He becomes a living thought—ever present—and you will find a reverence growing up which compares with nothing else in human feeling. You will feel that a slighting word spoken of Him wounds with a dart more sharp than personal insult. You will feel that to bow at the name of Jesus is no form at will of others, but a relief and welcome. And if it should ever chance that, finding yourself thrown upon your own self, and cut off from sects—suspected, in quest of a truth which no man gives,—then that wondrous sense of strength and friendship comes—the being alone with Christ, with the strength of a manlier independence. Slowly then, this almost insensibly merges into adoration. For what is it to adore Christ? To call Him God; to say Lord, Lord? No. Adoration is the mightiest love the soul can give—call it by what name you will. Many a Unitarian, as Channing, has adored, calling it only ad-

miration; and many an orthodox Christian, calling Christ God with most accurate theology, has given Him only a cool intellectual homage.

It will be seen from this with what wisdom and toleration he spoke of the Unitarians without surrendering an iota of his own faith. With the violent, bigoted, and unspiritual portion of their school he had no sympathy; but with those who occupied a higher region he had much sympathy, and to them he owed much. He read James Martineau's books with pleasure and profit. The influence of 'The Endeavours after a Christian Life' can be traced through many of his sermons. Theodore Parker he admired for the eloquence, earnestness, learning, and indignation against evil, and against forms without a spirit, which mark his writings. But he deprecated the want of reverence and the rationalising spirit of Parker.

He revered and spoke of Dr. Channing as one of the noblest and truest Christians of America. He was deeply indebted to his writings. He read them carefully, and borrowed from them largely. He spoke with indignation against those who would un-Christianize Channing, because in words he denied the coequal Divinity of Christ with the Father. He said, if the deepest love is the deepest worship, no man adored Christ more sincerely than Channing. He would have been more amused than hurt at the accusation brought against him after his death, that in praising Channing he was praising a Socinian. He would have said, to call Channing a Socinian, is like calling Fichte a materialistic Pantheist. He would have replied to the insinuation that he had

a tendency to Unitarianism because he admired Channing, that on the same grounds he might be said to have a tendency to Roman Catholicism because he admired Pascal, or a tendency to believe in particular redemption because he studied and revered Jonathan Edwards.

The truth is, that he recognised the value of Unitarianism up to a certain point. To the Unitarians had been committed the task of exhibiting more fully than others the truth of the Humanity of Christ. But while receiving with thankfulness their full declaration of this truth, he could not *remain* with them on their platform. Comprehending with great clearness and sympathy their stand-point, he was able to distinctly realise its want. He felt, that if Christianity were to become a universal power among men—if Human Nature were ever to be entirely ennobled, there must be added to the Humanity of Christ the Divinity of Christ. Nor was he content with merely saying ‘Christ must be Divine, because I *feel* He must be so.’ Contrary to his usual custom, he brings argument to bear upon the doctrine, and endeavours to prove it in his lectures on the Corinthians, and in several of his sermons.

With regard to the two other principles which he mentions, ‘that Christianity, as its teachers should, works from the inward to the outward,’ and ‘that there is a soul of goodness in things evil,’ no comment is required, for the first runs through everything he wrote and spoke, and the second ruled his life, his estimate of men, and his action upon them, as well as his view of the world, of history, and of nature.

The importance, not of explaining

his doctrines, but of presenting a concentrated view of the principles of his teaching, may excuse the apparent irrelevancy of this digression.

On February 10, he delivered a lecture upon Wordsworth. It had been promised in the August of the previous year. He had then written a rough sketch of what he might possibly attempt.

The Athenæum people have again asked me to give them a lecture—this time in place of James Anderson, who cannot come from some domestic affliction. I am rather tempted to comply. A subject is part of the difficulty, however. Two have occurred to me—‘The Influence of Fiction,’ and ‘Wordsworth, his Life and Poetry.’ This would be a large one, as it would require an investigation into the influences of the French Revolution on his mind in youth, both in its generous spirit and in its reaction. It would lead to the question how a life is to be led true to the idea of each man’s own character, of which rare case Wordsworth is a remarkable example. It would bring in, too, the question of how far rhythm is essential to poetry, and what is its influence, besides the main object of the whole—Wordsworth’s principles of poetry, faults, and excellences.

In the first page of his lecture he lays down his plan of treatment:—

In order to treat fully the subject which I have to bring before you this evening, I believe there are three points to which I ought principally to direct your attention. The first is, the qualifications necessary for appreciating poetry in general, and for appreciating the poetry of Wordsworth in particular. The second is, the character and life of Wordsworth, so far as they bear upon his poetry, and so far as they may have been supposed to have formed or modified his peculiar poetical theories and principles. The third point is, the theories

and poetical principles of Wordsworth, and how far they are true, how far they have been exaggerated, and how far Wordsworth has himself worked out the principles he has laid down.

The last, as he says, was the most important point of all—the subject; but the second lecture, in which this was to be treated, was never delivered, owing to his increasing weakness.

The published lecture on Wordsworth is not so generally appreciated as the two lectures on poetry, partly because Wordsworth belongs to the few and not to the many, and partly because it wants Mr. Robertson's corrections. But it is a true and thoughtful review of Wordsworth's life, character, and work; and a fine defence of the poet against the vulgar accusations of egotism and inconsistency. It has a further interest, as all that Mr. Robertson said has, in being more or less a revelation of his own character and heart. The qualifications he lays down as necessary for comprehending the poetry of Wordsworth were his own qualifications—'unworldliness'—and the more he lived, the more he learnt to protest, and to act out his protest, that the spirit of the world was more destructive of a Christian life than even sin itself—'feelings disciplined by nature'—and all his life long he endeavoured to free himself from conventional views of art and beauty, and to keep his heart natural and pure enough to receive impressions direct from Nature, and to see her as she is—'feelings disciplined through the minds of the great masters and poets'—and if there was one thing pre-eminent in his character, it was the beautiful and childlike reverence which he gave to those who were worthy, and his

hatred of the unvenerating flippancy of modern criticism—'a certain delicacy and depth of feeling'—and the depth, subtlety, and gossamer strength of his feeling, is that which chiefly appears in his writings, as well in his keen analysis of the feelings of others as in his morbid analysis of his own. He had another qualification, in that the passionate enthusiasm of his early days had given place to a calmer and sterner view of life; in that Feeling was no longer dominant in him, but Will; and Wordsworth is the poet of calm, and not of passion. He also felt deep sympathy with that want of the sense of the ridiculous in Wordsworth which made all the world, even to its meanest things, a consecrated world. 'The ludicrous now rarely troubles me,' he says: 'all is awful.'

He sympathised also with the variations of Wordsworth's heart between democracy and aristocracy. 'Wordsworth's tastes,' he says, 'were all on the side of conservatism, his convictions all on that of democracy. Such a man, when it comes to the vulgarities of life, shrinks from democracy—expects that all shall be as lofty as himself. Wordsworth was too fastidious. The only remedy was a less contemplative and theoretical life, and more work among the workers.'

The last portion of the lecture, in which he dilates on Wordsworth's love of England as the guardian of liberty, was written out of his own heart. Robertson was a man whose patriotism was based, not on the 'blind hysterics' of feeling, but on the faith that England was the witness to the world of the glory of duty fulfilled even to death—of freedom poised between Conservatism and Liberalism—of truth in business and purity in

domestic life. His voice, when it most truly expressed his devotion in England, would have said of her—

I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

The following are the only passages in his letters which relate to this lecture:—

January 25.

I have no journals of books read, or thoughts matured, to send you; for my whole journal has been thinking,—thinking—thinking about Wordsworth. I wish I had written the lecture, but I had not time; it takes so long in the mere act of penmanship. It is all in my brain somehow or other; whether it will come out orderly or tremblingly, I do not know. Then there is the question whether health or strength will be such as to give a command of words, and these two questions make the whole experiment a hazardous one. However, I must shut my eyes and harden my heart, as they say to boys riding over their first leap. When you get this it will be all over. Is it not curious how involuntarily one uses language concerning such a task which would be applicable to some terrible surgical operation? I do hate, detest, and abhor, as the oath of royalty runs, all speechifying and all publicity.

I am not writing with zest, but it is only that wretchedness—an old expressive English word extant in the Thirty-nine Articles—which comes from the tension of nerve in preparing for a lecture and delivering sermons.

I am becoming of opinion that no duty whatever has a right to interfere with a human existence. I am not myself on these days; I can see nothing in its true light, but all through a veil of black crape. This has now lasted ever since the Wednesday of that unfortunate postponement. It makes one selfish, and fastens attention upon the slow succession of ignoble suf-

ferings within—hour by hour, minute by minute, wearing, wearing, wearing.

Owing to some difficulty about the room, his lecture was postponed. He writes—

February 8.

The morning was occupied in a vain effort to work up my Wordsworth thoughts; for it is a mixed work—parts of the old thoughts coming in scraps to the recollection, and badly joining themselves with the fresh thought of the present, so that no consistent living whole is formed—the result of thought working itself out of thought—or rather a building made up by the fragments of an old building, clumsily worked into the masonry of to-day. It is a patchwork of memory and excogitation—neither wholly, and both incompletely. The laws of mind are very curious. How dissimilar those two operations of creating and remembering! and no joinership, however dexterous, can bring the edges together, so that the lines of junction shall not be seen.

February 11.

One line to tell you that my lecture went off last night successfully—that is, I did not break down, and preserved self-possession throughout; the room a perfect cram, and hundreds went away; but I have been suffering from severe pain in the head ever since—shooting thrills so sharp and sudden that I can scarcely forbear an exclamation. Whether people liked it or not, I do not know; and if I could only get rid of these stabs in the brain every ten minutes, I should not care. Two lights with reflectors were placed on the table, glaring in my face all the time, which prevented my seeing anybody. There was little or no applause, except now and then a low murmur; but, on the whole, I was glad of this, for the worst acknowledgment that can be made of an instructive lecture is to clap, and I think they showed their good taste. At the same time, it partly

arose from my own rapidity, and I trust, from the absence of any of those sentences constructed for clap-trap, which any public speaker at all practised can easily fabricate. One or two passages having reference to the invasion expected in 1802, connected with the reading of Wordsworth's sonnets on the subject, were the only points in the lecture that seemed to wake up any audible response from the audience.

The *South Church Union* criticised the lecture, alleging that it favoured Pantheism, and misrepresented High Churchism. Mr. Robertson replied in the following letter. Along with the criticism there were some innuendoes, which induced him to write the latter portion of his letter. It was not like his usual practice to lay himself thus open to the public. He had borne misrepresentation and attack so long in silence, that such a sudden unveiling of his heart in the columns of a newspaper is startling. It reads as if it had been wrung from him against his will—as if he knew that it was for the last time—as if he had thought, 'For once they shall know what their intolerance has done.'

March 4, 1853.

SIR,—In the columns of the *Brighton Guardian*, denominated the *South Church Union Chronicle*, I see some strictures on certain expressions attributed to me in my lecture upon Wordsworth. With the tone of the strictures—excepting one sentence which I regret, not for my own sake, for it is untrue, but for the writer's sake, for it is rude and coarse—I can find no fault. The whole criticism, however, is based on a misconception. It proceeds on the assumption that I complained with blame that—

'High Churchism regarded with peculiar reverence a sanctity as connected with certain places, times, acts, and persons,' etc.

I did not use those words. That was

not my definition of High Churchism, and to have condemned it as so defined would have contradicted my argument, for I was actually at the moment justifying Wordsworth, who is well known to have entertained such feelings. Had I so spoken, I should have condemned a feeling of the *relative* sanctity of such things—a feeling which I comprehend too entirely to have any inclination to interfere with.

What I did say was as follows:—

'The tendency of Pantheism is to see the god-like everywhere, the personal God nowhere. The tendency of High Churchism is to localise the personal Deity in certain consecrated places, called churches; certain consecrated times, called Sabbaths, fast-days, and so forth; certain consecrated acts, sacramental and quasi sacramental; certain consecrated persons, called priests.'

I endeavoured to show that the *tendency* is not necessarily the error; and that there are High Churchmen, like Wordsworth, who recognise in such places, persons, and acts, a sanctity only relative, and not intrinsic—relative to the worshippers, without localising or limiting Deity in or to the acts, times, or places; the Pantheistic and High Church tendencies, each false alone, balancing each other in the particular case of such men.

I have no intention of entering into controversy on this point; and I should, according to my hitherto invariable practice, have left both the misrepresentation and the criticism unnoticed, were it not that the words, as they stand, if used by me, would have evidenced an unworthy desire of turning aside from my subject to pander to the passions of my audience, and seeking a miserable popularity by an attempt to feed that theological rancour which is the most detestable phase of the religion of the day.

I do not merely say that I was not guilty of this paltry work. I say it is simply impossible to me. To affirm, whatever may be taught by our savage polemics, whether

Tractarian or Evangelical, that the new commandment is NOT this—‘that ye hate one another,’ and that discipleship to Christ is proved more by the intensity of love for good than by the vehemence of bitterness against error, is with me a desire too deep, too perpetual, and too unsatisfied to have allowed the possibility of my joining even for one moment in the cowardly cry with which the terrors and the passions of the half-informed are lashed by platform rhetoric into hatred of High Churchmen.

I acknowledge the courtesy of the attack on myself, and admit that in all attacks from the High Church side I have ever met, and expect beforehand to meet, generous, fair, gentlemanlike, and Christian antagonism.

At the same time, I could not help smiling good-humouredly at the writer’s utter misconception of my aims, views, and position. If he think that what he calls a philosophic height above contending parties is a position which any man can select for his own comfort and retirement, he miscalculates greatly. If he supposes that the desire to discern the ‘soul of goodness in things evil,’ to recognise the truth which lies at the root of error, and to assimilate the good in all sects and all men rather than magnify the evil, is a plan which will conciliate the regard of all, secure a man’s own peace, ‘and of course bring with it great popularity with the multitude,’ I can earnestly assure the writer that, whenever he will try the experiment, he will find out his mistake. He will, perhaps, then see a new light reflected upon the expression, ‘when I speak of peace, they make them ready for the battle.’ He will find himself, to his painful surprise, charged on the one side for his earnestness with heresy, and on the other for his charity with latitudinarianism. His desire to exalt the spirit will be construed into irreverence for the letter, his setting light by maxims in a want of zeal for principles, his distinction between rules and spirit into lawlessness. He will find his attempt to love men, and his yearn-

ings for their sympathy, met by suspicions of his motives and malignant slanders upon his life; his passionate desire to reach ideas instead of words, and get to the root of what men mean, he will find treated, even by those who think that they are candid, as the gratification of a literary taste and the affectation of philosophic height above the strife of human existence. I would not recommend him to try that ‘*philosophic height*’ which he thinks so self-indulgent, unless he has the hardihood to face the keenest winds that blow over all lonely places, whether lonely heights or lonely flats. If he can steel his heart against distrust and suspicion; if he can dare to be pronounced dangerous by the ignorant, hinted at by his brethren in public and warned against in private; if he can resolve to be struck on every side and not strike again, giving all quarter and asking none; if he can struggle in the dark with the prayer for light of Ajax on his lips, in silence and alone,—then let him adopt the line which seems so easy, and be fair and generous and chivalrous to all. But if he expects from it, ‘of course considerable self-applause and great popularity with the multitude,’ I can tell him they are not the rewards of *that* path. Rather let him be content to remain a partisan, and call himself by some name, Churchman, Evangelical, or Tractarian. Then he will be abused by many; but his party will defend him.

His definition of High Churchism called forth further remonstrance. One of his friends wrote to him upon the subject. He replied:—

MY DEAR —,—I gratefully accept your hint about the definition of High Churchmanship. I will modify what I said, to prevent misunderstanding. At the same time, as High Churchmanship, in the sense in which I was then speaking, is, in my view, an error, I must represent it in its most developed, not in its modified

form, and as the exact opposite of Pantheism. All grand truth is the statement of two opposites, not a *via media* between them nor either of them alone. I conceive Wordsworth to have held both—the Personality of the Eternal Being, and also His diffusion through space. Now, I cannot conceal my conviction that the vice of High Churchism is in its *tendency* to exaggerate the former of these, by localising Deity in acts, places, &c. It is the vice of Pantheism to hold the latter alone.

When a High Churchman fully recognises the latter, as Wordsworth did, I care little for any trifling exaggerations of the former, and I will always fight for him, and maintain that his High Churchism has no radical error in it, even though his *expressions* may to my mind seem to predicate locality of God much more than I should like to do it. But when he represents Personality as a limitation to time, space, acts, &c., instead of recognising it in three essential points, all metaphysical and super-sensual, *viz.*, consciousness, will, character, — then I must earnestly and firmly oppose High Churchism, and say that its tendency is to localise, and I must quote anxiously those texts which, taken alone, have a Pantheistic sound. ‘Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Heaven is my throne; Earth is my footstool: what house will ye build for me?’

And indeed I do think that this is a very common and very dangerous tendency. I will modify my definition by saying it is the *tendency* of High Churchism. That it is not inseparable from it, I showed by defending Wordsworth. High Churchism I hate. High Churchmen, many of them, I love, admire, and sympathise with.

The former of these two letters seems to have touched and excited some of the nobler spirits among the High Church party. One of them wrote to him, urging him to unite himself to them, and drew from him

the following reply, most valuable as the latest utterance of his convictions on many points of interest :—

60, Montpelier Road, Brighton,

April 1, 1853.

DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your cordial and welcome letter. It is a joy to meet with any testimony to the veraciousness of a ministry beset with disappointments, and to read in such testimonies a prophecy of a coming day when we shall understand at least what each other means.

To the main question of your letter, respecting the duty of union—that is, professed and active union with men whose earnestness is acknowledged—and the apparent unreasonableness of standing aloof and alone, it would take many sheets to reply adequately.

It is my belief that in all the tenets and practices of the High Church body there is an underlying truth; but then I confess that I should find as much difficulty in using their *forms* of statement in many points, as I should in using those of the Evangelicals in all points. With a thoughtful and large-minded High Churchman I believe I should sympathise more than with one of any section of the Church; but my recoil from the bare formalism of the half-educated and half-spiritualised of that school, would, I fear, be stronger than from the extremes of any other party.

Spirit is Eternal—Form is Transient; and when men stereotype the form and call it perpetual, or deny that under other and very different forms the self-same truths may lie (as the uncovering of Moses’ feet is identically the same as our uncovering our heads—ay, and I will even dare to say, often with the *covering* of the Quakers, when reverence for God is the cause for each), then I feel repelled at once, whether the form be a form of words or a form of observance.

To announce spiritual religion, as Christ announced it to the woman of Samaria,

independent of place, on this mountain or that—as Stephen announced it when they stoned him for blaspheming the temple—this, I think, is the great work of a Christian minister in these days. He will joyfully recognise a reverence for the Invisible in the even exaggerated zeal with which good men, afraid of Rationalism, Pantheism, Germanism, and a hundred other things, strive to confine a sacredness to churches, rites, offices; but he cannot and will not join such efforts to preserve spiritual religion, because he knows by the experience of history in what they must inevitably end. He knows that the attempt to be independent of form is a vain effort for beings encased in flesh and blood, and in a world which is the Great Form by which God has manifested Himself. But, at the same time, he must feel that the special Church forms are only valuable as a protest for the Eternal Presence in and through all forms to the spirit that loves Him, and he will dread all attempts to limit and confine God's grace and presence to any authoritative forms, however time-honoured.

Now, only giving these feelings as specimens, how could such a man join a party? He would soon be saying things which would make him a black sheep among them, every now and then protesting against their extremes with vehemence that would make him look like a renegade. What would he have gained by union? For himself and for others—nothing.

Unless a man has a skin like a rhinoceros, and a heart like a stone-fruit, it is no easy thing to work alone; the bad feelings of pride or vanity get as little to feed them in such a struggle as the better ones of sympathy and charity—and Elijah, stern and iron as he was, should be a warning to any common man to expect that many a day he will have to sit under his juniper-tree in despondency and bitter sense of isolation and uselessness.

Nevertheless it is my conviction that for some minds there is no other path open; they must speak such truth as is in them

fearlessly and uncompromisingly, pleasing no mortal ear on purpose. They must try—not by eclecticism, but by a true application (not the Tractarian) of the canon, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—to discern the one truth which lies beneath various apparently antagonistic forms, as Cuvier discerned the fossil types of organisation in things so diverse as leaves and lungs, tortoise-shells and human skeletons.

If God would raise up some man of rare largeness of heart and brain to do this work, and tell us what is the truth in each case which makes good men cleave to the error so tenaciously, a grand work of union might perhaps be accomplished, such as no 'Protestant Defence Associations' nor 'South Church Unions' ever can accomplish; for all that they can do is to win a triumph for their party, and none of them will venture to say that their party contains all the liege men of the truth.

For a man or a body of men to do this I earnestly long and yearn; and in the absence of such large-hearted and largely gifted man, I persist in trying, in my small blundering way, to do it for a few who will be candid enough to interpret what I mean. I believe the path in which I work is the true pass across the mountains, though the thought and the hand of the master-engineer are wanting to make it a road broad and safe for the people and the multitude to travel in; but that is not my fault or blame. God will provide His own workmen. I think I see how the work should be done, but I have neither the qualifications nor the strength to do it; but I can at least be faithful to my convictions and limited task, and I have cheerfully counted the cost, and have as cheerfully, for the most part, paid it.

This is a long letter; but I think the frankness of yours demands to be met with equal frankness.

It is really time now, after eighteen centuries, that we should get some better conception than we have of what Christianity is. If we could but comprehend the mani-

fested Life of God, Christ in His earthly career, how He looked on things, and felt and thought, what He hated and what He pitied, we might have some chance of agreement. As it is, I suppose we shall go on biting and devouring one another, and thinking—alas for the mockery!—that we have realised a Kingdom of God upon earth.

To understand the Life and Spirit of Christ appears to me to be the only chance of remedy; but we have got doctrines about Christ, instead of Christ, and we call the bad metaphysics of Evangelicalism 'the Gospel,' and the temporary transient forms of Tractarianism, 'the Church.'

To know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings—that is all in all; and if the death and life of Christ are working in a man, he is our brother, whether Tractarian or Evangelical, if we could but believe that very simple proposition.

I remain, yours faithfully,

F. W. R.

Shortly after the unusual exertion of the lecture on Wordsworth, he suddenly fainted in the street.

April 4.

During the day, while walking with J. Young, in West Street, on my way to the Training School, I fainted and fell. My first sensation, on coming to myself, was that of being conscious of voices around me, and I knew instantly that a crowd had gathered, though I had not in that hundredth part of a second opened my eyes. They tell me I leaped to my feet as if shot: I went a few steps into a shop, and fainted quite off into unconsciousness a second time; then came intense pain in the back of the head, which lasted for three hours. However, to avoid making a sensation, I went out to dinner, keeping my engagement; but it saved me nothing, for the fact is duly pilloried in the *Brighton Gazette* this morning, and my bell has rung with inquiries half-a-dozen times already.

This warned him that there was more radical mischief in his weakness and pain than he had thought; and, urged by his physicians, he consented to go to Cheltenham for rest. In April he writes:—

On Monday I go to Cheltenham. Severe and bewildering pain in the cerebellum has for the last few days made work dangerous. Dr. Allen's view exactly corroborates my anticipations: the only difficulty is, that the pain is not in the region of the intellectual organs, but in that of the sensational and affectional. When it moves forward I know that the paroxysm is ending, and then it never attains a sensation more vivid than that as of warm water occupying the interior of the head and forehead. The decline in mental power, and the entire incapacitation at times of some functions, and the severe pain produced by the attempt to exercise them, force me to look at the matter now seriously. In Cheltenham I shall ask Dr. Conolly's opinion, if he be there.

While staying in Cheltenham he rallied; but returning, on the third week, to Brighton, all the old symptoms reappeared. During his absence several members of his congregation, with thoughtful generosity, subscribed to enable him to engage a curate. He gratefully accepted their kindness, and nominated a gentleman known to them, and a personal friend of his own, the Rev. Ernest Tower.

May 17, 1853.

Mr. Tower has accepted my curacy, and both his father and mother, whose letters I have seen, are pleased. He is a gentleman thoroughly in earnest, hard-working, and attached to me. Our spheres and powers lie in different directions, which will prevent the possibility of collision; and as he will take the afternoon sermon, I shall have leisure for more pastoral work, at the pros-

pect of which I rejoice ; for I cannot say how humiliated I feel at degenerating into the popular preacher of a fashionable watering-place. In addition to this, he has strong health ; so that I shall not have compunction in delegating work to him when I am unfit for it.

These pleasant hopes were disappointed. The Vicar of Brighton, in whose hands the power of a veto lay, exercised his legal right in the most legal manner. Owing to reasons which appear in the correspondence given in the next chapter, he refused to confirm Mr. Robertson's nomination of Mr. Tower. This was on Trinity Sunday, the 22nd of May. On the 29th Mr. Robertson preached without the help he had so long desired ; and on the following Sunday, the 5th of June, his voice was heard for the last time in Trinity Chapel. His sermon in the morning was for the Orphan Asylum ; the subject was the parable of the Barren Fig-tree—'Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, "Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ?"' By a strange and sad coincidence, his afternoon lecture was on part of the last chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. The closing sermon of a long course of lectures was also the close of his career. With what a sorrowful force came back upon the memories of his congregation the words which he had read as part of his last text—'Finally, brethren, farewell !' No one who wishes to penetrate, as far as possible, into the solitary manliness and endurance of his life during the last month of his pulpit ministrations, who would understand the suffering and the strength of his nature, the mingling of meekness and

noble pride, of self-surrender and high, self-confidence, of quiet faith and of an almost triumphant ecstasy of faith, should omit to read the notes of the last three lectures which he delivered on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

I remember seeing on the manuscript of one of these, on 'The Thorn in the Flesh,' the mark of a tear. It had fallen as he wrote alone in his room.

Self-contained, master of himself, when he could weep in the solitude of his study it was full time that he should be freed from his long sorrow. And God blessed him with Death, the Releaser. In three months after he had spoken of the pain of St. Paul, he entered into the painless land.*

Letters from Jan. 5th to May 18th,
1853.

CXLV.

January 5, 1853.

Last evening I began Benvenuto Cellini's 'Life,' which I had never read before. What a very strange one, and what a strange time it paints ! The murder of a man who had slain Cellini's brother in self-defence is related with the utmost coolness, as well as the way in which Pope Clement VII. connived at it. Certainly, an artist's life does not appear one conducing to moral excellence ; Cellini was a most ungovernable, vain, passionate man, unrestrained by any rule except his own feelings ; yet he seems to have been an intimate friend of Michael Angelo—a right noble man. If Cellini is to be believed, he killed the Constable Bourbon with his own hand,

* I have printed at the end of this chapter the letters of 1853 up to the month of June. The remaining letters attached to the following chapter were written, after he had given up public life, during the months of June, July, and August.

and almost singly defended the Castle of St. Angelo, besides a number of other wonders, any one of which would be sufficient to make a life famous. His profligacy, too, seems to have been without measure. Such books do not amuse me as they do most people. They set me thinking, and most painfully; bewildering, and entangling the skein of life and human destinies hopelessly. In the midst of it all religion comes in from time to time—and the names of God and Christ as objects of supposed and, I conceive, sincere worship, jarring, however, upon the sense of fitness, like the Messiah between two thieves, as if He had been their accomplice. What is one to make of it all, and how judge of this strange world, which becomes to me more unintelligible every day?

No reply from M——. I shall be glad to go, not only for the sake of the solitude, but also for the exercise, for I begin to feel it once more indispensable, and without delay—for mental restlessness and powerlessness increase to a painful extent. I cannot read for ten minutes consecutively, much less think.

CXLVI.

I have just finished Maurice's three sermons on the Crystal Palace question, recently published. As usual, they are the offspring of a capacious mind and large heart. In the main his view is the same as mine, though the statement differs somewhat, as the idiosyncrasies of the two minds differ, and he has brought more thought and more historical learning to the subject by far. Like all he writes, they are exceedingly suggestive, and likely to do more good, I should fancy, in the study than from the pulpit, were it not that these were addressed to a Lincoln's-Inn congregation, which may be supposed to have in it minds trained to habits of consecutive attention. There is matter for thought for hours in these sermons, but most people would read on from sentence to sentence, and when they turned over the

last page and found *finis*, be tempted to exclaim, 'But what does he mean? and what is proved?'

CXLVII.

I have just finished writing a sermon for the morning. It is an old subject, from notes, with fresh language, and several fresh thoughts. Somehow I cannot originate thought and subjects now as I used. Perhaps it arises from feeling that enthusiasm and affection and trust, and perhaps respect, towards me have cooled, partly from my own fault, partly from the malicious misrepresentations of the Evangelicals, as well as of others. So far as this has chilled the spring of energy, there is something wrong; for energy ought not to arise out of self-respect or the assurance of being heard with sympathy. Yet it is not all wrong even in this respect, for some natures cannot do without sympathy, public or private—though perhaps pride, or some other peculiarity, makes them haughtily refuse all common and even the fair methods of securing what the Evangelical books call 'acceptance,' and what old Aristotle lays down as one of the first things to be acquired, and indispensable to the success of one who addresses masses—namely, the 'goodwill of the audience,' that is, a personal feeling of well-disposedness towards the speaker who is to convince or teach them.

* * * *

I am proceeding with Cellini's 'Life.' What a wonderful picture of human life, and human heart, and human society! The *naïve* and inordinate vanity of the man is astonishing, and refutes the foolish popular notion that real talent is never vain, and real courage never boastful. Falstaff's braggadocio is modest in comparison of his. Conceive a man gravely telling you that after the vision in his prison a glory encircled his head through life—visible on his shadow, especially on the dewy grass at morning, and which he possessed the power of showing to a chosen

few. And then the religiosity and hymn-writing of a man who records, in admiration, the murder in revenge of three separate persons who had slightly offended him. Very curious, too, is his account of the unblushing rapacity, violence, and profligacy of the Popes Clement and Paul III., to say nothing of the villany of the cardinals, bishops, and Dukes of Ferrara. It was a curious time when men had to redress their own wrongs, and goldsmiths were compelled to be accomplished swordsmen if they would live one day in safety. Fancy Mr. Lewis armed *cap-à-pie*, or a tailor coming to measure you with a sword on his thigh! Yet a dusky clouded sense of right, honour, and religion runs through the book: *bizarre* enough, it is true, and suggestive of many reflections. Society progresses—do men? Benvenuto gratified every passion, slashed and slew his way through life. London jewellers wear no swords, and get rich by bankruptcies; is the gain very great, are we not less of men than in those days?

It is a wonderfully graphic life. That power of painting what was seen and what appeared, instead of our modern habit of reflecting and philosophising upon it, brings the whole scene before the eyes. How living and real, as if of yesterday, the portraits of Francis I., Madame d'Estampes, Titian! And how curious, as compared with Rousseau and Tasso, is Cellini's perpetual discovery of conspiracies against himself, and of the implacable enmities of popes, dukes, ladies! The imaginativeness of a brain which had in it a fibre of insanity, near which genius often lies, would, I suppose, account for two-thirds of this—and his extraordinary irascibility was but another form of it. An innkeeper, whose horse he has overriden, keeps his saddle and bridle in retaliation, and Cellini sets off and buries his dagger in the spine of his neck. Another man affronts him slightly, and he resolves to cut off his arm; then his mad escape from prison, with the ingenuity of a maniac; the descent by

sheets, curiously procured, cut in strips, and the desperate fall and fractured leg; all to escape from a Pope, who was trying to murder him in the most incredible ways—it is very curious.

CXLVIII.

A letter arrived from — to-day. I did not like the expression in the one you sent me, where she speaks of the sacrifice made for —, and the strengthening effect of sacrifice on the character. It is a bad habit of sentiment to fall into. People who make real sacrifices are never able to calculate self-complacently the good the said sacrifices are doing them; just as people who really grieve are unable at the time to philosophise about the good effects of grief. 'Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous.' That is true philosophy. In the lips of one struggling might and main to strengthen character, and living a life of the Cross and of sacrifice, such a sentence as I have quoted might be real; as it is, it is simply unreal—a sentence got by heart, and I think very dangerous. Nothing is more dangerous than the command of a pen which can write correct sentiments, such as might befit a martyr or an angel. And the danger is, that the confusion between a commonplace life and that of an angel or a martyr is hopeless. For when the same sublimities proceed from the lips and pens of both, who is to convince us that we are not beatified martyrs and holy angels? Such a sentence as this would have been more real, though somewhat sentimental still: 'How dare I talk of Sacrifice! and, how little of it is there in my life—one perpetual succession of enjoyments!' It has often struck me that Christ never suffered these sentimentalisms to pass without a matter-of-fact testing of what they were worth and what they meant. It is a dangerous facility of fine writing, which—I say it in deep reverence to Him—Christ would have tested by some of those apparently harsh replies which abound in His life, such

as to one professing great anxiety to be with Him, saying he wished it and not doing it, 'Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.'

* * * *

I only took the morning duty yesterday, being too tired for the second. As I sat inactive in the afternoon, listening to Mr. Langdon and gazing on the dense crowd before me, I felt humbled exceedingly to think I had to address those numbers every week twice, and that their spiritual life depended, for those hours at least, speaking humanly, on me. How wonderful the opportunity, and how heavy the responsibility! In the crush and rush and hurry of work, and the personal anxieties connected with it, such thoughts do not come, except rarely; but when out of harness, and looking, in the dusky light of evening, into the almost solemn darkness, the feeling came painfully. Such feelings, unhappily, evaporate in the dust of life.

CXLIX.

The last hour has been spent in examining a pile of eighteen letters waiting my arrival—some long, none important, two anonymous—one of them from a young lady, defending fashionable society against my tirades; these last I feel are worse than useless, and very impolitic. Nevertheless, more and more, a life of amusement and visiting seems to me in irreconcilable antagonism to Christianity, and more destructive to the higher spirit than even the mercantile life in its worst form; and yet I do not know; who shall say which is the national spirit more surely, inevitably tending to decay—that of the cities of the plain, or that of Tyre and Sidon?

* * * *

The austerity that comes *after* life's experience is more healthy, because more natural, than that which begins it. When it begins life it is the pouring of the new wine into the old weak wine-skins, which

burst; and the young heart, cheated out of its youth, indemnifies itself by an attempt to realise the feelings which were denied it by a double measure of indulgence in age. An unlovely spectacle! Can anything be more melancholy than the spectacle of one who is trying to be young, and unable to descend gracefully and with dignity into the vale of years? There is a fine tomb of, I think, Turenne,* at Strasbourg. An open grave lies before him; Death at his side, touching him with his dart; and the warrior descends, with a lofty step and saddened brow, but a conqueror still, because the act is so evidently his own and embraced by his own will, into the sepulchre. I remember it impressed me much with its moral force, and it has little or nothing in it of French theatricality and attitudinising.

CL.

A long dreary vista of many months of pain opens out before me. Was that a good omen—just as I wrote those words a sudden gleam of sunshine burst out of this gloomy day upon my paper? Benvenuto Cellini would have taken it for a special prediction vouchsafed from heaven, yet it would have made him not a whit the better man. What I miss exceedingly is any religious aspiration through all his book. Convictions of Heaven's personal favour and favouritism are expressed in abundance, but I do not think those religious, in the true sense of the word. In a lower sense, perhaps, they are; at least, a feeling of Divine and personal sympathy is indispensable to religion—perhaps one of its bases; but the other basis—a belief in and aspiration after what is high, beautiful, and good—is the more solid and the less easily misused basis of the two; and this you do not find in Cellini's art as in Michael Angelo's, Canova's, Beethoven's—no effort at expressing a something unearthly, which is the true province of imagination.

* Query, Maréchal Saxe.

I think it would be an interesting thing to work out that thought: How far Religion has those two sides—the sense of Personality, including sympathy, and the sense of an abstract Beauty, and Right and Good—the one, if alone, producing superstition and fanaticism, or else the mysticism of the Guyon school; the other, if alone, producing mere ethics or mere statesmanship.

CLI.

This morning I arrived here on a visit to Lady Byron, and have been in the house all day, having had no time yet to go out to see the country, which I am told is interesting, with rich woods and fine commons. Lady Byron showed me a picture of Lady Lovelace, taken at seventeen. How different from what she was when I knew her—unquestionably handsome, and with an air of sad thoughtfulness which then characterised her! Startling lessons these, in which two or three portraits bring a whole life before you, and show the fearful changes in the outward being. ‘Our little life is rounded with a sleep.’ Startling, because it reminds how the only thing that remains permanent is character. I have seen, too, to-day the original MS. of *Beppo*, from which the poem was printed. All such things are curious, and, in certain moods, prolific of much reflection, or rather feeling. The sweep of time, the nearness of the farthest off to that which is nearest, the nothingness of one’s own existence in that flood of time—these are the thoughts which come, and, though very old ones, very new every time they present themselves, for they always startle.

The quietude of this place is refreshing, after the inevitable life *en evidence* of Brighton, its hurry and its glare. I have only been a few hours away, and I feel as if I had got back to the home-life of life, and am myself again, with no weight of weary duty hanging over me, and no necessity of addressing a crowd of critics who are supposed to be before me to be

taught; and yet within three days I shall be there again, in my old place, and at my old work. I wonder how you will like those sermons I sent you on the Virgin; the wisecracks at Brighton called the first Popery.

Coming in the train to-day, I read in the *Edinburgh* a review of Mrs. Jameson’s ‘Legends of the Madonna,’ and was startled to find that it expressed, almost in the same words, what I had said the last two Sundays. Now, as I had held the same views long, and even preached them years ago, it puzzled me how the identity could have arisen. At last I recollected that three years ago, while Mrs. Jameson was preparing her work, she asked my opinion on the theology of Virgin-worship, which I gave to her, and which I perfectly remember seemed new to her. It has worked in her mind ever since, and she has published almost my words, perhaps unconscious of whence they came. That this must be so is evident to me from the reflection that, when the mind is full of any subject, it is impossible for the most casual remark to fall upon it without impression and without fructifying. The *Edinburgh* gives her credit for much originality in this view. I am pretty sure of its true origin, and I am not aware that I got it from any source except my own reflection. It would be awkward if ever I were inclined to publish those sermons, for it would be hard to prove that plagiarism was not on my part, and it would seem ungenerous to charge it upon her.

Tell me what you think of the two sermons* on one subject. They have excited here a good deal of ignorant gossip and pious horror; people shaking their wise heads, and ominously predicting that I am on my way to Rome. How many ages would it take to explain what Shakespeare meant by ‘the soul of goodness in things evil’? and how long would it need to prove, that to say an error rests upon a

* Vol. ii. 247, 265.

truth is not quite the same thing as saying that an error is truth?

I consider these two as an instalment towards an intention, long indulged, of going through some of the main doctrines of Romanism which I consider to be erroneous, and showing what the corresponding truth is, which the error meant to say. I do not mean to do this in a way that would satisfy the learned, but only popularly. I shall leave out all recondite searchings into Councils and dogmas, and try the matter by the test of common sense, and what may be called the spiritual sense, which we surely all possess, more or less—the best in the highest degree. Such a publication might at least stir up deeper minds to try the same plan with more success.

CLII.

Your question on the subject is not full enough for me to be sure that I am replying to what you want to know. A person can believe in a fact or a being whose nature he cannot comprehend—as, for instance, in God, or in vegetation, or in life—but no one can believe a proposition the terms of which are unknown to him. For example, 'Three persons are one God.' Unless he knows what 'person' means, he cannot believe that, because he attaches no meaning whatever, or else a false one, to the assertion. And it is preposterous to say he must believe it as a mystery, because the Church says it; for all that he does in that case is to suspend his judgment on a subject of which he knows nothing, and to say, 'The Church knows all about it, but I have not the smallest conception what it is she knows.' So, for instance, a mathematician says to me, an ignoramus, 'The velocities of planets vary inversely as the squares of their distances. Presumptuous sceptic! don't you believe that?' 'Well,' I reply, 'I dare say you are right—nay, I believe you are; but I cannot say I believe that long sentence, because I do not understand what it means.' 'Dolt! idiot! believe without understanding.' 'Well, wise

sir, I will. "The inverse squares of the planets"—no, how is it?—"The velocities of planets vary inversely," &c.' 'Quite right—good and orthodox scholar. Now do you believe in Abracadabra?' 'Sir, do you?' 'Yes.' 'Then, so do I.' 'But what is Abracadabra?' 'Never mind that—believe.'

All that is simple nonsense. No man can believe that the earth goes round the sun, unless he knows what that proposition is, and what is the meaning of 'earth,' 'round the sun;' but once knowing this, he may believe it, though it is contrary to the evidence of his senses, and though he does not understand how or why it is.

Apropos of believing in things which we do not understand, a Tractarian was in Trinity when I preached on Mariolatry. 'I did not agree,' said he afterwards, 'with Robertson. Woman—woman! I do not understand what woman is.' I sent him a message to say that I have been exactly in the same predicament all my life.

Just returned from Earnley. I found the shooting experiment useless, in consequence of the hard frost having frozen up all the streams; so, after two days' hard walking, in which I saw five snipes, shot two, and two plover, I thought that even Nimrod's ghost would absolve me from faintheartedness if I gave up the attempt as hopeless. However, I spent an exceedingly pleasant evening with Mr. L——, and drank a glass or two of Mrs. L——'s orange-wine with a good grace. He is possessed of intelligence quite uncommon in that line of life—I mean the agricultural—and is reckoned the best farmer in the neighbourhood. I should have learned something if I could have, with decency, and the excuse of sport, stayed longer. As it was, I dived into the mysteries of 'shoulder drains,' 'wedge drains,' and 'tile drains.' He has been for years a free-trader, but is very anxious for the repeal of the malt-tax. He says that if you were to offer him a return of 500*l.* of rent, and as an equivalent the repeal of the malt-tax were proposed, he would sacrifice the

rent without hesitation. He gave me a very lucid account of his view of Sir R. Peel's currency measures some years ago, which he said was a loss of 5s. in the pound to the farmer.

According to him, the farmers have been very ill-used, but he is very cheerful about it. I said—'But the brewers say the repeal of the malt-tax would be unfelt by the consumers; consequently more beer would not be purchased, and the farmers would gain nothing. Is that true?' He replied that some years ago, when the duty on salt existed, there were salt-basins all along this coast—Bognor, Selsea, and two other places between this and Portsmouth. But when the tax was taken off, no one thought it worth while to make salt. 'How was that?' 'Why, the makers ran (smuggled) a large proportion, and so managed to gain all the tax in addition to the profit.' 'Do you mean that that is the reason why the maltsters now are against the repeal, because they pocket a part of the tax?' 'I know they do,' said he.

He is a good churchman, makes all his labourers go regularly, and is firmly but modestly opposed to Calvinism and Tractarianism. Before the present incumbent, there was one who wrote him a note, very civilly expostulating with him for not turning to the altar, and even turning from it to the light to read his Prayer-book, and if he would not do it on principle, to do it for his sake. Mr. L—— replied, quietly, that if he did not do it for the honour of the Creator, he certainly would not for His creature. But not knowing the matter *à fond*, and conscious that it was with him a vague feeling, he asked a neighbouring clergyman where he could gain information on all such subjects. 'I do not like,' said he, 'to know nothing, and the clergyman to knowall.' The book prescribed was Milner's 'Church History,' and he spent the winter in reading that long book right through, and, as his memory is good, has forgotten nothing of it.

The house is a capital one—too good, he

says, for a farmhouse—with cellars, which he turns into a dairy. I slept in a good comfortable room and capital bed, and nothing could exceed his efforts to be hospitable in the hearty old English way. The farm is liable to overflowing floods, which is considered in the terms of the lease—low in consequence. He told me of his dismay in seeing the tide once come pouring over the barrier, which it at last swept away, and flooded the whole farm, regular billows going over his sown land up to the house. It went down, and, though the barrier was gone, did not rise the next tide beyond its accustomed height. For three years after such a flood the land is injured, and all the grass poisoned.

The farming is, even to an ignoramus, visibly admirable; draining going on in every direction; hedges, or rather fences, unbroken; no useless expense; living plain and simple; no foreign wines: 'I like them, but they are not fit for us farmers in these days.' Beer, and home-made wines, costing sixpence per bottle, and cherry-rum, almost indistinguishable from cherry-brandy, but saving very many shillings per gallon: these were the beverages of that hospitable home. I wonder what an Irish squireen would say, or would once have said to this.

I walked all day yesterday and to-day on the thick snow and half-frozen streams alone, with little enjoyment, haunted by miserable thoughts, dispirited, hopeless—feeling the bleak sunshine and the distant bellowing of the sea as if they were the visible type and audible echo of life, with its disappointments and its shocks! It was a relief to be alone. It was strange, but L——'s graphic account of the desolate spectacle of the flooding tide which he had stood to witness seemed to me as if it were the wraith of the feelings I had experienced; and in the bewilderment the two got mixed, and I could not at certain moments distinguish what was the dream and which the reality, or be certain that he was not narrating objectively what I

had already seen or felt in ecstasy or vision. I shall never forget those strange days: the sweep of desolate plain, the glaring snow, the bleak sunshine without wind, the frozen streams—the rushes without the usual life of birds springing from them, which one expects—the sea-roar, the lifelessness of all—the stillness which was not relief, and the sounds which were not expression, all combined to image that ‘Death in life, the days that are no more.’

Mr. —’s irreverence about the Fire is very like that school of Evangelicalism. I must do them the justice to say that that is not the fault of them all: Mr. — here, for instance, is solemn enough; Mr. P — told me of his being asked out to wine at college, and replying with sepulchral solemnity, ‘I am *serious*.’ That false notion of a peculiar favouritism which they have with God, unshared by others, gives them that familiarity. The view which I believe to be the true one of baptism, declaring Sonship the right of all, ‘mine, because I am a man,’ is the only thought which I think an effectual antidote.

The letter I received from *that* lady is in earnest, so far as it goes; only that fatal facility of strong words expresses feeling which will seek for itself no other expression. Those resolves to study, to be serious, religious, &c., are such as might have been made at John the Baptist’s baptism—a solemn call to a new life; and followed by serious and earnest effort, they would in such a case have been well, but uttered at the outset of a London season, they will pass off in the first polka, and do much more harm than if they had never been made. She believes or means what she says, but the very vehemence of the expression injures her, for really it expresses the penitence of a St. Peter, and would not be below the mark if it were meant to describe the bitter tears with which he bewailed his crime; but when such language is used for trifles, there remains nothing stronger for the awful crisis

of human life. It is like Draco’s code—death for larceny, and there remains for parricide or treason only death.

CLIII.

Last night I spent at home; I meant to dedicate the time to writing, but I was in a mood too dark and hopeless to venture. The exhaustion of Sunday remained; I tried light reading in vain. At last Charley came in from school, and I made him do his Latin exercise before me; all the while I kept my eyes fixed on that engraving of the head of Christ by Leonardo da Vinci, which I have had framed, and felt the calm majesty of the countenance by degrees exerting an influence over me which was sedative. Then I made him read over, slowly, the Beatitudes, and tried to fix my mind and heart upon them, and believe them; explaining them to him afterwards, and to myself as I went on. ‘Blessed are’—not the successful, but the poor ‘in spirit.’ ‘Blessed,’ not the rich, nor the admired, nor the fashionable, nor the happy, but ‘the meek and the pure in heart, and the merciful.’ They fell upon my heart like music. Then I thought I would just read a little of Golding Bird’s volume of ‘Natural Philosophy,’ in order to brace the mind and add tone to harmony; but the effort had been too great, and after reading some twenty or thirty pages, I fell asleep, and woke again.

To-day I have spent in the Town Hall, in the midst of a tumultuous meeting. We are trying to get the Health of Towns Act introduced into Brighton. Demagogues, whose interest will be injured by it, are stirring up the working classes against it. It was an odd sight—as the mob always is—

Thou many-headed monster thing,
Oh! who would wish to be thy king!

At the root of the whole matter, as usual, lay selfishness and ignorance. One respectable man said to me,—in reply to my observation, that modern science had discovered the cause of epidemics, etc., in

want of cleanliness, undrained houses, etc.—‘Why, sir, if these are injurious in 1853, I want to know why they were not injurious in 1800?’ ‘Suppose,’ said I, ‘they were, and suppose in former ages, when people wisely attributed the plague to the poisoning of wells by doctors, there were some other very simple reason which they really did not know?’ The truth is, the knowledge of this enlightened age is the knowledge of a few—the many are as dark as they were ages back.

I enclose one sheet of a letter from Lady Byron, containing strictures upon my ‘Lecture on Wordsworth.’ They are erroneous, because she misunderstands my meaning, which I had not sufficiently developed. I maintain that the localising of Deity of which he speaks was only that which an affectionate imagination does in reference to the presence of any loved person; an act which has only reference to his or her own mode of conceiving that presence—as when a relic or keepsake is preserved, or a chair felt to be sacred. An enlarged mind in such a case localises safely, because it is in no danger of confounding its own modes of viewing and realizing with an actual presence there. It knows that there is a presence, but only suggested, not inherent. A limited intellect confuses its own necessary helps with an actual something external to itself, and the spirit of the loved one is supposed to be *there*. So in Wordsworth’s High Churchism, I maintain it was due in him only to the poet’s creative power. He felt a relief in associating God, the personal, with definite places and acts; but Wordsworth never merged God’s indefinite in those conceptions: vulgar High Churchism does.

What Lady Byron says of the apparent contradiction to my views of the progress from Judaism to Christianity, in Wordsworth’s progress, viz., that the former was from the localised to the illimitable, the latter the converse, is only true in appearance. All human education does not

follow the same exact course; nay, it may begin in one case at the opposite extreme from what it does in the other. The great question is, ‘Do they end in the same at last?’ I think Wordsworth’s mind at first lacked the conception of personality. It was added afterwards; and if this reverse method of procedure were unlawful, how could a man who sets out with pantheism ever come to truth? He cannot follow the Jewish order, which I admit is the more natural one, as existing in the order of thought by which childhood passes into manhood.

* * * * *

The historian I mainly meant in speaking of national decline was Arnold. But do not misunderstand me. I do not say I respect long ancestry much; I only say the *prestige* is a valuable one, and more spiritual than the power of wealth; and also, that having a character to support, frequently ensures a character, so that there are certainly virtues which are essentially aristocratic. But when it is remembered that the purer the ‘blood’ is, and the less mixed, the more certain is the deterioration physically and morally, and also that the regeneration of a people never yet came from its aristocracy, there can be no doubt that while our sympathies cling to the past, and while we feel that, in the past, hereditary rank has done a great part, it is impossible to hide the fact that the passing away of it is not an unmixed cause of regret. Blood, so far as it represents real worth, is much to be desired for its *prestige*; but when the *prestige* is gone, blood, with its feeblenesses and faults, is not to me an object of respect at all—at least, I mean in the individual cases.

What can ennoble sots, or fools, or cowards? Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards!

It is a thing that has been, that will never be again—a thing that once did a work, and now has no more work to do. I honour old Greece, and the old Greek work; but I have not the smallest respect

for a modern Peloponnesian or Athenian, though he had in his veins the unblemished descent of Aristides, or Solon, or Lycurgus.

CLIV.

To-day I walked to Lewes with H— over the Downs, and home by the road. The walk to Lewes was a stiff one, for the hills were wet from the scarcely-melted snow, and on the north sides they were hard with frost, so that we slipped about considerably. We did it, however, all the way at a racing pace—there and back in three hours and a half. I took a hot bath in my own room directly on my arrival, and feel considerably refreshed—the brain clearer, and at this moment all my nature sinking into a natural and healthy weariness such as has not come to me for a long time. It is wonderful how views of life depend upon exercise and right management of the physical constitution. Nor is this, rightly looked at, any cause for perplexity, though it seems so at first; for though you might be inclined to view it as a degradation of our higher nature to find it so dependent upon the lower, and hope and faith and energy resultant from a walk or early hours—yet, in fact, it is only a proof that all the laws of our manifold being are sacred, and that disobedience to them is punished by God. And the punishment in one department of our nature of the transgressions committed in the other—as, for instance, when mental gloom comes from uncleanness or physical inertia, and, on the other hand, where ill-health ensues from envy or protracted doubt—is but one of many instances of the law of vicarious suffering. We are, as it were, two, and one suffers by what the other does.

CLV.

As to the 'History of England,' Lingard's is very good; dry, however, and on all Roman Catholic questions not to be depended upon. It appears to me that the history of England is a subject

too enormous to attempt to teach a child. I would rather select some salient points; for example, the reign of Alfred,—then the Norman Conquest. Thierry might be extracted for this with Lingard. The times intermediate between this and Henry VIII. I would teach by some abridgment; for his reign I would take Lingard, and Blunt on the Reformation. Mary, in Miss Strickland, who leans, however, unduly to her, as you will see by the 'Westminster,' when I send it. Elizabeth's is very important—Lingard; for the Charles' reigns, Guizot, and Mackintosh and Fox, though the two latter might be dispensed with. Then Macaulay for the Revolution. In this, or some such way, a course of English history might be gone through, in a calculated number of months, and mastered. The intervals might be filled in in after years. But, taken as a whole, English history becomes to most minds either a string of dates and names, with no principle of national life traced out, or else a dreary continent of mud. For French history, I would content myself with Sir James Stephen's lectures and Sismondi's history, abridged by himself in three volumes; but I would not be induced to teach more until these were mastered.

In Oxford four years are spent in preparing about fourteen books only for examination: but this is only a partial representation of the matter, for those fourteen books have been the subject of school-work for years. These are made textbooks, read, re-read, digested, worked, got up, until they become part and parcel of the mind; about four histories, three or four philosophical works, four poets, and two or three miscellaneous works. These are the choice master-works of two languages, and whoever has mastered them is a scholar indeed. By C—'s letter to you I see she is reading Southey's 'Peninsular War,' and meditating one or two other great works. At Oxford, Southey's 'Peninsular War' would take six months to study, pen in hand, getting up the

details of policy, battles, laws, geography, &c. It is better not to read at all than to run through such a book. I have got a small popular book on chemistry, which I am reading now, of 160 pages. I have read little else for a fortnight! but then, I could bear an examination on every law and principle it lays down. Fownes' 'Manual of Chemistry,' a small 8vo, will take me six months, I calculate; but then, as a medical man said to me to-day, 'If you study it in the way you are doing, you will know by that time more chemistry than nine out of ten of the medical men in this town.' I never knew but one or two fast readers and readers of many books, whose knowledge was worth anything. Miss Martineau says of herself that she is the slowest of readers, sometimes a page in an hour; but then what she reads she makes her own. Do impress this on E—. Girls read too much and think too little. I will answer for it that there are few girls of eighteen who have not read more books than I have; and as to religious books, I could count upon my fingers in two minutes all I ever read—but they are mine. Sir Erskine Perry said the other day, that, a fortnight ago, in a conversation with Comte,—one of the most profound thinkers in Europe,—Comte told him that he had read an incredibly small number of books these last twenty years—I forget how many—and scarcely ever a review; but then what Comte reads lies there fructifying, and comes out a living tree, with leaves and fruit. That multifarious reading weakens the mind more than doing nothing, for it becomes a necessity at last, like smoking, and is an excuse for the mind to lie dormant, whilst thought is poured in and runs through, a clear stream, over unproductive gravel, on which not even mosses grow. It is the idlest of all idlenesses, and leaves more of impotency than any other. I do not give myself as a specimen, for my nervous energies are shattered by stump oratory, its excitements and reactions; but I know what reading is, for

I could read once, and did. I read hard, or not at all—never skimming—never turning aside to merely inviting books; and Plato, Aristotle, Butler, Thucydides, Sterne, Jonathan Edwards, have passed like the iron atoms of the blood into my mental constitution. My work is done,—I know and feel it; but what I have appropriated remains; and if I had not appropriated it so, there would be no soil now or hereafter to grow anything or even for appearance.

CLVI.

An evening of failure. In vain have I tried to work or think. The only resource at last is to fall back on an old sermon. This mental powerlessness is becoming fast an alarming thing; memory and grasp are both going; and with an incessant call for fresh thought, this feeling is a more than ordinarily painful one.

I have done all I can to throw off this impotency of mind and will, and this growing coldness of a species of despair, by long walks, cold baths, and complete change of study—by taking up chemistry and natural philosophy again. Such studies bring a different class of faculties into play from those exercised in my own work, and so rest the overtasked ones; but as yet I feel no benefit.

Mrs. V— read to me —'s letter about the Wordsworth lecture. Yes, indeed, if I had not been a parson; but what Mr. — speaks of as the alternative in this case, the being heard of in the world, would be a poor thing to have won. What I long for is work that I can do in love, without meeting the rancour and the bitterness and the malignant slanders which I rouse on every side. It is a bitter thought that this is the only visible result of efforts that have been long wearing life.

How rare is it to have a friend who will defend you thoroughly and boldly! Mr. — missed an opportunity of doing this for me, and has not the courage to do it now as he ought to do; leaving me, in

consequence, defenceless against a slander, though I put the proof into his hands. How indispensable strength is for high goodness—strength moral or intellectual—neither depending necessarily on physical strength!

Yesterday I took a walk beyond Hove with Mr. V—. In the cross-road between the Worthing Road and the Upper Road we found a crowd behind a hedge, and shoals of women flocking from Brighton towards the place. On inquiry, we found that it was the spot where a child was murdered, or rather its body hidden, two days ago, by its mother, a servant-girl. The child was six years old, and it is supposed that she murdered it in order to be unencumbered, and to be able to go to Australia. It is very inexplicable to me how such things exercise an attraction over people, and what can induce them to take long excursions to see a *spot*, where nothing but the spot is to be seen. How utterly vain it is, with such an instinct in human nature, to attempt to eradicate the High Church tendency, the disposition to localise, as I said in my lecture! If they cannot guide the feeling and direct it rightly, all attempts to merely thwart it will be vain.

I have been spending my time in laborious idleness—every thought I think, and every line I write or read, costing pain, sometimes acute, and sometimes dull, of brain. I shall not be able to go on much longer if this continues; whole tracts of brain seem to be losing their faculty, and becoming quite torpid and impotent—memory being the most observable and the most tormenting. All originating power I have ceased to try to exercise, on principle, lest it should go entirely. I seem to myself already in sight of that goal which a London physician, an American, told me I should reach in due time—organic collapse of the brain. I have been reading a little chemistry, by way of change, and am beginning regular experiments in it; but

then this I cannot work at except for a quarter of an hour at a time.

A hideous accident occurred to-day at the station. At 7 A.M. a loud explosion shook my house. Some persons took it for an earthquake. Shortly after I learned that a boiler had burst, and that much damage was done. I went to the station, and found an enormous portion of the roof on the Portsmouth line had been blown away, and all the windows of the station, as well as many in the road above, broken in. I saw three human bodies reduced to one hideous bleeding mass of fragments—a scalp here, a shoulder there, and a leg or hand in another place; one was recognisable, but his face was scalded like a Red Indian in colour, and all the skull stove in, one arm blown off, and the limb shattered; the other two were torn to shreds. A leg was blown over the houses into Guildford Street, and through the windows where two people were at breakfast; another, on the other side, towards St. Peter's Church, into a garden. I will not attempt to describe the horrible scene minutely, for I never saw anything so humiliating to our humanity; nothing but a 'knacker's yard' could give a conception of it. I thought at once of a French invasion, and of those lines in the 'Siege of Corinth':—

Alp turned him from the sickening sight, &c.,
just after he had seen the lean dogs beneath the wall

Hold o'er the dead their carnival.

It was a strange contrast to come back again into the busy town, and see people unconcernedly walking about within a hundred yards of so much horror; but I felt there was nothing in such a sight to *create* one religious emotion or resolve, though it might evoke it if it were in the heart already. Of themselves such things only tend to harden and degrade, I am quite sure; for how can horror, or the thought of death brought near, make goodness beautiful or God loveable? I

see in them no natural tendency whatever to convert the heart to God; and I can understand how the dissecting-room and the field of battle may brutalise low natures, at the same time that they may elevate high ones. Pray read over again, with reference to this thought, Wordsworth's 'Happy Warrior.'

CLVII.

I have spent this evening in reading thoughtfully and meditating on Neander's 'Doctrine of St. John,' imbuing my mind with a tone of thought for Sunday next. I find that to be the only way in which my mind works. I cannot copy, nor can I now work out a seed of thought, developing it for myself. I cannot light my own fire; but whenever I get my fire lighted from another life, I can carry the living flame as my own into other subjects which become illuminated in the flame. Mechanical composition of any kind is out of my power, always was. It is wonderful how powerless I am, except as working from life. Even memory seems extinguished when the heart's life is not in play; and any inspiration brings out its invisible traces again, as fire brings out the colours of sympathetic inks on paper. Unhappily, of late, such life cannot be as once—seemingly, at least—self-kindled. I need a foreign influence to imbue my mind with some other great mind, till the creative power rises in the glow. All, therefore, that I can voluntarily effect is to bring myself intentionally and purposely within the sphere of such influences as can kindle; only they become fewer every month; and their power to inspire is more uncertain and more dependent upon outward circumstances and seeming chance.

Did I tell you of a practical solution in part of the question as to what the influence of pictures may be religiously? I took the 'Leonardo' up to my room some weeks ago, on a Sunday night. The next morning I awoke tired, and felt inclined to dawdle away my time in bed; but that

calm, dignified look, bent down from my mantelpiece, absolutely rebuked me, and made it impossible. It is true, the impression would have worn off before a second experiment could have been fairly tried.

Rodney House, Cheltenham :

April 15.

I am truly glad you like Humboldt's letters so much. How necessary for appreciation of a book, scene, picture, society, is a certain previous adaptation of the frame of mind! Do you remember how little you cared for that book the first time of reading it in a smaller form. Experience, added light, and the aspect given by events which no purpose or control could have arranged, have given it now fresh meaning and made it a new book.

The difference which you remark between the moral effects of those two places is curious. The contemplative *genius loci* of the one I can comprehend, though it always impelled me to action, exercise, and excursions; but the activity-exciting spirit of the other place I less readily can conceive. There is a certain sombreness there which rather invites to sadness, unless you rush to action in self-defence; and perhaps the air of civilisation reminds you there that you are in a world where the law is, Be busy about something. Now in a state of savagery, or anywhere that the march of contrivance and the teeming numbers of population urging to industry are shut out, life can more readily become a dream—a melancholy, but tender, and not rude dream.

Here in this place I find much altered: most of my intimate acquaintances are gone, married, buried, or estranged.

CLVIII.

Cheltenham.

Light reading and visiting old acquaintances have been my sole occupation here. I have finished 'Ruth' and 'Villette,' and several of Sir Walter Scott's, and am much

struck by the marked difference between the fiction of his day and ours; the effect produced is very opposite. From those of Scott you rise with a vigorous, healthy tone of feeling; from the others, with that sense of exhaustion and a weakness which comes from feeling stirred up to end in nothing. Scott's narratives run smoothly on with a profusion of information respecting the outer life of the days which he describes—the manners, customs, dress, modes of thought, and general feeling; but you have no glances into the inner life—no throes and convulsions of conscience—no conflicts of Duty with Inclination—no mysteries of a soul treading wilfully? or compelled by circumstances, the dangerous, narrow border-land between right and wrong. Partly this is accounted for by the fact that in his stirring times life was an outer thing, and men were not forced into those mysterious problems which are pressing for solution now; and partly by another fact, that women have since then taken the lead in the world of literature, and imparted to fiction a new character. They are trying to *aborder* questions which men had looked upon as settled; and this might have been expected, from their being less able to understand or recognise the authority of statute law and conventional moralities than men, and much less disposed to acknowledge their eternal obligation, and also much more quick to feel the stirring laws of nature—mysterious, dim, but yet, in their way, even more sacred. The result of this has been, that questions which men would rather have left unexamined, or else approached with coarseness, are now the staple subjects of our modern fiction—'Jane Eyre,' 'Villette,' 'Ruth,' and many things in Margaret Fuller's writings; these, with the works of several American writers, as Hawthorne, in whom, though men, the woman movement has worked deeply, are the most remarkable of our modern novels, and characterise the commencement of an epoch. That great question, how far con-

ventional law is to stifle the workings of inclination, and how far inclination—supposing it to be sacred and from our higher nature—is justified in bidding it defiance, what a wide field that opens! It is a perilous question, and opens a door for boundless evil as well as good.

The French writers have said, as usual, with the full licence of a nation to whom Duty has no meaning, that the door is to be wide as hell; 'Evil, be thou my good,' seems to be the watchword of those that I have read. If they are right, God is a Being whose existence is as superfluous as a devil's. A sense of horrible materialism steals over me in reading their attempts to solve the problem, and the laws of materialism seem the only ones left to guide man. The 'constitution of man' must replace the prophets, and a study of the cerebral laws of organisation sweep away the sanctions both of the Law and the Gospel. Mesmerism and Electro-biology must take the place of the New Testament, and *les beaux sentiments* become our compass instead of the Book of Life. Happily, the English novelists have approached the question with purer instincts and a more severely moral tone—witness 'Jane Eyre' and 'Ruth;' and yet they do open the question, and I rejoice to see it opened: yes, and more—opened by women, for I despair of men ever doing it with justice. The new divorce law, as proposed, refuse to the woman the right to divorce her husband, let his crimes be what they may, unless he adds brutal ill-treatment of her to crime. What hope is there from such a social state of feeling?

The worst, however, of the new tone in novel-writing is, that it sets one thinking in a way that can find no vent in action, and makes one dissatisfied with existing errors and institutions, without the slightest possibility of altering them; nay, or even knowing what alteration to desire. The result of this becoming general, may, perhaps, produce a restlessness which will issue in improvement; meantime, each must

be content to bear his share of the unsatisfied restlessness which is hereafter to find such issue.

I am not well; I am suffering much, but it is of no use to talk about it. Nothing can be done except by attacking symptoms, and that is useless. The causes are irremediable, and they must go on working to their consummation.

CLIX.

Cheltenham.

To-morrow, by the early express, I return to work. I wish I could take another fortnight, for this rest has only done partial good. The chief good it has done me is in having shown me much more of staunch affection, unchilled through six years' absence, than I supposed was to be found in this light place. Certainly I have been surprised to find how warmly and truly many have cherished the remembrance of me. Five men here I have found steady as steel to the magnet; and that, out of so few who remain, is a large number—all laymen.

It is not necessary to say that absence from Brighton is now impossible for some months to come; by August I shall be thoroughly tired again, I fear,—nay, if I were to search for a word to exactly express what I feel now, mentally and physically, I should select 'shattered.' In a literary point of view, I find Sir Walter Scott the most healthful restorative of any. There was no morbid spot in that strong, manly heart and nature.

Brighton.

What a valuable gift it is to be able to take up the thread of thought as if it had never been broken! Scott had it. He would dictate two novels and to two amanuenses at once. With me a broken flow of thought will not gush again. I began with my mind full of thoughts. Now, after a long interruption, I feel exhausted and dissipated: the thing is gone from me, as the simple writers of

early days expressed it. Moreover, the splitting headache has come back again; it returned on Saturday, as soon as I began to work; and on Sunday I could scarcely see for pain. I only took the morning pulpit, and preached an old Cheltenham sermon. All the evening I spent lying on the ground, my head resting on a chair.

I have been reading 'My Novel'—the first volume only as yet—the only work in the form of a tale I ever read which succeeded in introducing moral and political discussion, and even making the work practical by their introduction, without being tedious, tempting the reader to skip the politics and take the story; even 'Coningsby' failed in this. 'My Novel' weaves the tale and the doctrines inseparably together, and in a really masterly way. The discussion of the Parson and Riccabocca with Linney respecting the pamphlet with the motto 'Knowledge is power,' is very clever and interesting. The book breathes a sound, healthy tone of feeling, very different from Bulwer Lytton's earlier works. For instance, in page 204: 'He had been brought up from his cradle in simple love and reverence for the Divine Father and the tender Saviour—Whose life, beyond all record of human goodness—Whose death beyond all epics of mortal heroism, no being whose infancy has been taught to supplicate the Merciful and adore the Holy—yea, even though his later life may be entangled amid the storms of dissolute pyrrhonism—can ever hear reviled and scoffed without a shock to the conscience and a revolt to the heart.'

Bulwer's mental career is a very peculiar one. Generally minds exhaust themselves—the wine first, the lees afterwards; witness Sir Walter Scott after many years. But his was a strong nature. Commonly the indications of running dry, or repeating old views and character under new forms, show themselves after one or two works: in the lady novelists this is very conspicuously so—so too in Hawthorne; in

the voluminous James, of course. But here is Bulwer coming out with his last two novels as fresh and different from each other, and as racy and original, as if he had never written anything before.

CLX.

MY DEAR —,—I have read gratefully your most eloquent letter; but for the life of me I cannot make out the exact practical upshot of it. Beyond the direction to consult a 'finger-post physician,' I read it through again and again for guidance in vain.

Well, as to that, I have not been so foolish as not to have done it long ago. I paid three guineas, foolishly, to three leading London physicians for an opinion. The first (—) prescribed, I forget what —some hash or other; the second threatened 'organic collapse of the brain,' and refused to prescribe anything save entire and total cessation from the pulpit for life. The third (—) recommended *lettuce!*

Here, Taylor recommended opiates. Allen and Whitehouse, men in whom I have profound confidence, say that all medicaments in my case are charlatany. In Cheltenham, the only man I would trust in this particular case was away. A personal friend, a homœopathic physician, amused himself with giving me microscopic points of aconite, to my benevolent enjoyment of his credulity. They can do nothing, and they all tell me so; only they disagree as to the amount of danger. One hinted idiotcy. Others advise relaxed toil. Now, as I *cannot* toil, and do so no longer, this advice is in vain.

A curious circumstance occurred yesterday. A member of the Trinity congregation, a chemist, fancied galvanism would do me good, and kindly offered his battery for my use one hour a day. I called to thank him and decline the offer. But in conversation he persuaded me just to go and look at his apparatus. I took the ends of the wire, completed the circuit, and experienced the usual pleasurable

tingling. Then holding it in one hand, and he holding the other wire in his, he touched the back of my head and neck, where I have lately felt pain and numbness. Not a sensation did it elicit, though the spot which is generally, he says, most sensitive. Then he touched my forehead. It was but for a second. Instantly a crashing pain shot through as if my skull was stove in, and a bolt of fire were burning through and through. I sprang to my feet, stood for a second or two wild with pain, and then sank down, and should have had another ladylike swoon, if he had not run to the shop and fetched some poignant aromatic. He seemed much astonished, frightened, and perplexed at what had taken place. I was not surprised. I knew that something was wrong there. Allen thinks nothing organically as yet (I have not told him this), but the sensations are very strange and startling which I experience in twenty-four hours. It has nothing to do with 'tic,' which always attacks the chest, &c., &c. The worst sensation now is numbness in the neck.

You will perhaps think me a hypochondriac. But a man who knits his teeth together in solitude for hours, without a groan, in torture, and is guilty of nothing effeminate except fainting, and upon whose life a sentence of death for to-morrow would scarcely bring any other words than *Nunc dimittis*, is hardly hypochondriacal. Nevertheless, it is my conviction that my work is done. I do not mean my life; that may drag on for many years to come; but all that makes life worth the having, and which certainly I had once—*power*. What would you have me do? I go through as little work as possible, nor could I diminish except by totally giving up. Give up I cannot because I cannot afford it; among other reasons, my generous congregation have munificently put funds at my disposal which will enable me to provide a curate's assistance for two years—so that is a great step, and I

have thought it right to accept their offer. But I acknowledge that the sensations of brain by day and night now are so new, strange, and unnatural, that I feel they have only contrived, by their kindness, to keep among them a worn-out Chelsea pensioner, with leave to wear a red coat, and play at shouldering arms.

You mistook me in thinking I did not sympathise. A few years ago, when I felt less, you would have been more satisfied, when the eyes showed moisture, the voice emotion, and when I had a gentler manner and a more ready show of responding to what was expected. Now, a certain amount of iron has gone into my blood; and a sardonic sentence often conceals the fact that I wince to the very quick from something that has gone home.

Oh, many a shaft at random sent
Finds mark the archer little meant !

I no longer wear my heart upon my sleeve, 'for daws to peck at.' But there is not a conversation, there is not a book I read, there is not a visit I pay, that does not cut deep traces in the 'Calais' of my heart.

CLXI.

I answer some of your questions: I Cor. ix. 27. 'Castaway.' The meaning is—Lest after having preached to others the doctrine of self-abridgment of indulgences in things lawful, I myself should fail when put to the test; literally, should be that which will not stand proof. The advice to abstain from things lawful, he gave them in the 8th chapter—see verses 9 and 13; then, in chapter 9, he shows that he had only done what he advised; he had a right to a wife (verse 5), and a right to be supported by pay; but he had abridged himself of both these rights (though every principle of the Old Testament, chapter ix. 8 . . . 13, 14, established his right), simply in order to be beyond suspicion and gain the more to Christ. Read the two chapters 8 and 9 as one argument, and the whole will become intelligible.

'If there be any virtue:—'if,' &c., is not an oddly-constructed phrase; it is purely classical Greek. It means, whatever is virtuous, praiseworthy, &c., think upon such things. An old poet writes, 'nor if old Anacreon wrote aught sportively has time destroyed it.' He does not mean to hazard a doubt, but simply to say, whatever Anacreon wrote is undestroyed. It is a Greek idiom, and only sounds curious in English.

You would not like ——'s preaching. It is not what it was once—concise, sinewy, masculine, and clear as crystal, defying any listener to suspend attention. He has degenerated into verbiage; and in the last sermon I heard, he took ten minutes to say what three sentences might have settled. He has lost his power, which was once the greatest I ever knew. The sentimental people of his congregation attribute it to increase in spirituality; but it is, in truth, a falling-off of energy of grasp. I heard four sermons from him with scarcely four thoughts, and much absolutely false logic. But how can a man preach for ten years without exhausting himself, or else pandering to popularity? Talk, talk, talk for ever, and no retreat to fructifying silence!

That is a well-put criticism you quote respecting Currer Bell. Her talk is of duty, her sympathies lie with passion. And the dangers of that style of composition are great; but she never blinks the question of right and wrong, and her right is of a stern order, though her wrong may be very tempting. In point of power she is a giant to the authoress of 'Ruth,' but her book is less sweet and human.

Poor ——! how bounded every life seems, judged as we judge; yet the results are for ever; and it has been again and again declared, the deepest philosophy in the universe is repeated in every cubic inch, and all the laws of the ocean in a cup of tea—why not be satisfied, then, with the cup of tea whose sphere is not absolutely illimitable?

CLXII.

I have found pain a humbling thing, and, what surprises me, certainly not a souring one. Many and many an hour have I spent lately incapable of even conceiving enjoyment or pleasure, and feeling as if youth and hope were settling down into premature decrepitude, my very limbs having shrunk to the dimensions of Shakespeare's lean and slippered pantaloons; and yet I am grateful to say that not for years has the feeling been so true or mixed with so little bitterness—'not as I will.'

On Sunday, after service, a lady came up to me whom I had known in the very outset of my ministry. She talked with me of the past; and then said, with tears, 'But, oh, you are so changed in mind, it is quite heart-aching to hear you preach: it was no longer the bright, happy Mr. Robertson.' The truth is, I had been preaching on St. Paul's thorn in the flesh, and this would partly account for what she remarked. Yet conversation with her brought back those days at Winchester strongly, and I felt that she was right, and that the shadows of life had settled down. Yet is not this the common experience for the first four-fifths of life at least?

Knowledge comes, but Wisdom lingers, and
 he bears a laden breast,
 Full of sad experience moving towards the
 stillness of his rest.

CLXIII.

I must acknowledge the truth of what you say in the main, that I do not admire any one who is not in robust health. Of course I must bate a little exaggeration in the form of statement; but I acknowledge that I think health more beautiful than ill-health, and a normal state more pleasant than an abnormal. There may be some apparent exceptions to the rule, as in the case of recovery from illness there is a certain delicacy which is very attractive; but then it is the first flush of health that gives the beauty, just like that which makes spring more interesting than sum-

mer. Still it is not merely delicacy that is beautiful, but delicacy pervaded by health and conquered by it—life in its first fresh rising, like a new childhood; but I acknowledge that I cannot acquire the sickly taste of admiring the delicacy of ill-health. Beauty, in my eyes, depends much upon association; and delicacy that calls up one's knowledge of morbid anatomy, and suggests the thought of disordered functions, and abnormal states, and physicians' attendance, never affects me with a sense of beauty. This may be an unfashionable view, but I am certain that it is a sound and healthy one, fresh from Nature's heart. The other taste is of the same family as that which makes the Chinese admire feet quashed into smallness. I admire refinement in a female form; but the moment that it appears as the result of ill-health, I reject it as a counterfeit. For this reason I cannot even admire the hectic of consumption; it puts me in mind at once of glaring eyes and panting breath, and I see what will be. I have a fastidiousness of taste in this respect, almost painful, and I acknowledge that I admire the beauty which God made—health—immeasurably above the counterfeit which man procures. A country girl, modest and neat, is not my *beau idéal* of beauty; but I admire her far more than a pale, languid girl of fashion, just as I like brown bread better than bleached white veal; but I think you are much mistaken if you mean by delicacy that I do not admire refinement. I cannot admire anything that reminds one of the 'mould above the rose,' and forces upon one the question, whether an allopathic or homoeopathic druggist could best get rid of that delicate look. I delight not in anything unnatural or diseased. Lord Byron has well described this unhealthy taste about beauty, in his description of the Spanish ladies, as compared with the 'languid, wan, and weak' forms of others. I rejoice that you like Wordsworth's 'Life.' Badly and coldly as it is written, the extracts from his own letters give some

insight into his inner life. And it seems to me, in reading lives, the question too often is, whether it be one which in all respects answers our ideal of a life; whereas the question ought to be, whether it has strongly exhibited some side or other of our manifold and many-sided life. I am satisfied with One life—with One ideal, and I read all others to understand that, by illustration or contrasts of their whole to parts of it. Now Wordsworth throws some light on its purely contemplative side. The life of Action and Sacrifice is wanting, but I can find those in various forms—in Wellington's life, or women's, &c.

My life for the last few weeks has been one of perpetual pain—forced to work, and

forced to mix with people, and to talk when it has taken me actually, only two days ago, an hour and a quarter to crawl, by back streets, from Kemp Town, in suffering all the way; and now at this moment languor makes me stop in writing after every third line. If my congregation had not come forward so generously, and if I had not received so many letters full of kindness, containing expressions of pain and regret about my looks, &c., I should, I verily think, have given up work entirely, so hardly does it press upon me, and so much that is painful have I had to submit to. But their warmth has settled the question and left me no alternative, and I must work on as long as I have strength for it.

CHAPTER XII.

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST, 1853.

Mr. Robertson leaves Trinity Chapel for ever—The Controversy with the Vicar of Brighton—The last sad Months—His Death and Burial.

THE last few months of Mr. Robertson's life were not passed in peace. A blow was dealt him by one to whom his courtesy had been invariable, and dealt him at a time when its stroke was fatal. The Rev. H. M. Wagner, the Vicar of Brighton, refused, from personal pique against Mr. Tower, to allow of his nomination as curate to Trinity Chapel, unless under conditions which Mr. Robertson refused even to propose to Mr. Tower. There was nothing for Mr. Robertson to do but submit; but that submission hastened his death. It was imperative that he should have rest. In his letter to the Vicar he urged not only his friend's cause, but the opinion of the doctors, that without help his own health must finally give way. The

Vicar replied that his objection was conscientious and final; and yet this objection rested on the single circumstance that two years before Mr. Tower had resisted the Vicar's will, not on a religious, but on a financial question. 'You will agree with me,' writes Mr. Robertson in his published letter to the Committee, 'that this conduct leaves me without an alternative. I will not trust myself to characterise it as I feel it, for strong sense of wrong makes a man prone to use strong words. It is enough to say quietly, using the mildest terms which are consistent with truth, that by a discourteous and ungenerous exercise of legal power, and by the rude manner in which I was personally treated and of which I have said nothing in this

letter, the Vicar has put it out of my power to offer another nominee, or to accept any favours at his hands. I owe this both to my friend's character and to myself. There remains for me nothing but to go on with my work single-handed as long as I am able.'

Undeterred by the tone of this letter, Mr. Wagner wrote to ask Mr. Robertson to name another curate. This proposition was the last stroke. It was answered by the following dignified and forcible refusal.

60, Montpelier Road : June 22, 1853.

REVEREND SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 18th inst., in which you recommend me to present another nominee for your approval, and offer to find some one to supply his place till appointed.

I regret that I cannot reciprocate the bland tone of this last communication; for I confess that patronising offers of favour seem to me out of place, when that which is asked for, and still peremptorily refused, is the redress of a wrong. And I regret to find that you view the matter between us, your own part in it in particular, in a much more light and easy way than that in which any one else will see it. Suffer me to be explicit; for the forbearance of my first letter having been unappreciated, I am compelled to speak English that cannot be misunderstood.

I cannot offer another nominee; nor is it in my power to accept at your hands the favour of any aid such as you offer.

I will examine, first, the objection against Mr. Tower, and how far it is possible for me to pass smoothly by the rejection of my friend, and receive a favour from his rejector.

The charge, as I collect it from your words, assumes two shapes:—

1. Unbecoming behaviour in interfering with the affairs of the Lewes Deanery Branch of the Society for Promoting

Christian Knowledge—a society established in your parish.

2. Unbecoming conduct towards yourself.

With respect to the first, it must be remembered that, though Brighton be the head quarters of the Branch Society, and the Vicar of Brighton at present chairman, it is not a Brighton society, but one belonging to the whole Deanery of Lewes, and that, as a clergyman of the Deanery, and member of the Committee, Mr. Tower had an equal right with yourself to move any measures he thought right. It is as incorrect to imply that he interfered with a parochial society, or the prerogatives of the Vicar of Brighton, as it is unjust to insinuate that, as a curate, he took too much upon him. The country clergy gave him—he did not *assume*—a leading part in the discussion, because he was furnished with considerable information from the Parent Society.

2ndly. With respect to Mr. Tower's personal conduct to yourself. An overwhelming majority of the Committee—all, indeed, I believe, except those who are bound by some personal tie to yourself, and, therefore, perhaps naturally, feel with you—are prepared to assert that Mr. Tower's conduct on those occasions was that of a Christian and a gentleman. If necessary, I shall call for that testimony. I *could* call for more, but I have no wish for re- crimination.

For the question is not, after all, whether Mr. Tower spoke warmly to you, or you to him, nor whether Mr. Tower was right or wrong in the course which he at least pursued conscientiously; but the question is, whether that course was sufficient ground for permanent unforgivingness on your part, and whether such offences as a personal difference with yourself, and interference in a favourite society of your own, admitting them to have existed to their fullest extent, are just grounds for the rejection of one whom you yourself admit to be in conduct and doctrine an

exemplary Christian minister. No bishop would exclude from his diocese on such grounds; if he did, all England would ring with the news of the transaction.

I will now advert, with much regret, to your treatment of myself, which will account for my inability to adopt suddenly the suave tone of your last communication. I fix on a single instance.

On Trinity Sunday, during our first accidental interview between services, I told you several times that I was desirous of postponing the subject of the curacy till to-morrow, and anxious to return home, as I had to prepare for the duties of the afternoon pulpit, and was much pressed for time. In spite of this, within half an hour you abruptly and unnecessarily invaded a privacy which you knew I had such anxious reasons to keep calm and sacred from interruption; and with yourself you forced upon me as a witness a gentleman personally unknown to me. The witness system, in a conversation between gentlemen, used by you to me even more offensively on a previous occasion, is in itself a very objectionable proceeding. It is scarcely necessary to say that the interruption incapacitated me from addressing my congregation on the intended subject.

I select this fact, not because it is the only instance, by many, of your discourtesy, but because your own witness was present. These are not supposed to be the manners of civilised society; nor can the grievance of them be obliterated by a few smooth lines, not of apology, but of patronage. It is curious to see with what marvellously different degrees of tenacity men retain the recollection of their own discourtesy to others, and that of others towards them. At the end of a couple of weeks, all that you said and did to me seems to have vanished from your mind; at the end of two years, Mr. Tower's so-called transgression against yourself is as indelible as ever.

I much regret that it is my duty to write thus plainly, because I foresee that the

publication of this letter may be necessary,—the right of doing which I reserve to myself; more especially as your uncalled-for offer to supply my pulpit may give a fallacious aspect to the whole affair, unless I very distinctly show what the question at issue is, and what it is not.

I can offer no other nominee, because I cannot admit your right of rejection on personal grounds. I am informed that you have a legal right; but I believe the whole world will deny your moral right. I know that, as you have stated, you are irresponsible by law, and can reject without assigning a reason. But irresponsibility is one thing in despotic Russia, and another thing in free England. No man can be irresponsible to public judgment in the exercise of a solemn public trust.

Nor can I subject another friend to the chance of your discovering, as in Mr. Maclean's case, a ground of objection in the circumstance of his taking pupils; or, as in Mr. Tower's case, in the fact of his having had the misfortune to vote against you an indefinite number of years ago. Lastly, I will not subject any gentleman again to the indignity of being asked for guarantees for conduct, or willingness to support, blindfold, the particular societies which you choose to name.

I have the honour to be, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

FRED. W. ROBERTSON.

Mr. Wagner won his legal victory. Mr. Robertson gave up the contest, and went home to die. He could bear no more. The endless committee meetings and correspondence harassed a frame already worn out, and all chance of recovery became hopeless.

I am really and seriously unwell (he writes); more so, I think, than even the doctors say; for the prostration of every kind of power has been too complete and too permanent to mean nothing, as there is no distinct cause. Do not put it down

to hypochondria. I can endure any pain, and am not afraid of any future; but the entire inability to do any work, physical or mental, without exhaustion which is intolerable, appals me. To such suffering as I have borne for months death would be a very welcome relief.

No defence worthy of the name was put forward by Mr. Wagner. No one can say that he knew what he was doing, or had any idea of what Mr. Robertson would suffer; it was incapability, not animosity, of feeling. He did not know that his brother minister was dying, but he did believe that his own dignity had been hurt; and, alas! he could not see that there are times when the resentment of a personal injury is a public injustice, and the exercise of a legal right a moral wrong.

Nevertheless, as if these excuses had not existed, the indignation in Brighton was extreme. To so great a height, indeed, did it rise, that assuredly, had he known of it, Mr. Robertson would have endeavoured to check its violence; but he was closely confined to his room—forbidden either to read the papers or to see his friends. It was all over for him—happily enough; the ceaseless contest against underhand slander on one side, and open opposition on the other. Little did he now care for the gentlest praise or the loudest blame. It was a curious and sorrowful contrast to turn from Brighton and its excitement on this matter—from the papers in the columns of which appeared letter after letter, some violent, some satirical, and few moderate—from the angry discussions in public and in private, every one almost taking one side or another—to turn from these things and enter the stillness of the

sick-room where the unwilling cause of all this lay, his life ebbing slowly from him in bitter and unremitting pain.

The only history which can be given of the last two sad months of his life is from his own pen, in the following short and hurried letters. Nothing can be more pitiable to look at than the handwriting. Few men wrote so clear and fair a hand. But the last ten or twelve of these records would seem to have been written by one who had just been delivered from the rack. Every stroke of the pen zigzags with the feebleness of pain:—

June 20.

I received your letter this morning with many thanks. I am unfit to write, though a trifle better. I have scarcely manhood enough to hold a pen. I was forbidden to do any duty yesterday, and spent the day in listlessness and semi-dozing. The Confirmation candidates must be prepared, and it is my duty. They may be empty unmeaning girls, but so most girls are—and among people of this character the chief part of ministerial work lies, for the simple reason that others are the exception; and if we are only to teach and preach to those who have much meaning in them, I fear schools and churches must be shut up. If I prepare them now, I may get away with a better grace in August; if not, I must either return a little after that time, or leave this important part of my duty at sixes and sevens, with a fair cause for grumbling on the part of parents, and for running all over the town to different clergymen to prepare them, subject to the question in each case, 'Why does not your own minister prepare them?' Now it is foolish to defy public opinion. Prime Ministers cannot do it: the only man who can is the man who has neither profession nor public duty. Every one else has to pay a certain price for his office, from the throne to the parish constable, and he must either submit to

those restrictions and penalties, however galling, which are shared by all, or else give up his office.

I do dislike Brighton, but it is my present sphere, and I must make the best of it. The ministry is nowhere a bed of roses; and if there were so delectable a spot, it is not open for me to change to instead of this. It is a wise man's duty to try to work within his limitations in the best way he can, and grumble as little as possible: or else cut himself asunder at once from all restrictions and obligations, by giving up his sphere of work entirely. What makes it, too, all the more difficult in my case is, that I am a marked man: and whether it be notoriety or popularity, no one on whom others' eyes are fixed in affection, or in malicious watchfulness for a false step, can emancipate himself from the necessity of caution, or take his own will for his law, when Will merely means unbridled course of inclination. Duty must cut public opinion boldly against the grain, if necessary; but if any one assumes for inclination the same rights, and does what he likes because he likes, in defiance of public opinion, he must first secure the indemnity accorded to unfeigned eccentricity, or else must pay the penalty without murmuring. Now I acknowledge I am not invulnerable to slanders—I know no one who is—nor am I a man to whom the world will accord impunity. Even in to-day's *Gazette* there is a long, vulgar, dull lampoon upon my views, which, wretched and ignorant as it is, is yet irritating.

July 2.

Thank you for your kind invitation to go to your house, but I had hoped to be well enough to go through the Confirmation work. Since then I do not think you have any idea how ill I have been. Even yesterday it took me fifty-five minutes, with rests, to walk to the Vales; I could not walk back. A tradesman, unknown, came out and offered me a seat in his shop. A poor man offered me his arm; and so my looks cannot have been either fascinating

or herculean. Life has been for a month one long pain and languor; the lower extremities were partially paralysed, so that I dragged them after me. At night, sleepless pain; by day, change of powerlessness from two chairs to the sofa, and from the sofa to the ground.

I am not a bit stronger or better, except that I can sit up and write. Recovery is much more tedious than I expected, still I hope to be all right before long. Sometimes, in powerless moments, I am tempted to think that my work is done; I do not mean life, for that will go on long enough, but all work of thought, energy—all except the mean work of attending to health. At other times things do not look so bad. Anyhow, the lesson that *will* get itself learnt is a good one; and the truest view of life has always seemed to me to be that which shows that we are here not to enjoy but to learn.

July 8.

I send you a letter of Faraday's, published in *The Times*, which gave me pleasure, because it assigns, almost in my words, precisely the same origin to table-turning, &c., which I had discovered; because, too, the principle of the test invented by Faraday is exactly the same as that which I applied to Rutter's imaginary discovery, and because his remarks at the end coincide with the opinion which I have so often expressed about the false and ignorant state of the public mind which these endless credulities and restlessnesses betoken. On this I could, and some day will, say much, but I can scarcely get strength to guide my pen. I am sentenced finally to abstinence from duty for six months. The lower extremities, for several days, were in a state of semi-paralysis, but Taylor said:—'We think we can make a cure of you, but you will have hard work; you are thoroughly broken.' Nevertheless, I am better, having had four Sundays' rest.

Pray let me have Faraday's letter back again. It did me more good than blisters, morphine, quinine, steel, or anything else

which they give me. Sound, genuine, healthy, scientific truth, instead of the sickly craving after mysteries and preternaturalism that marks the idler classes now. It is the same state of feeling as that blamed in Scripture, as 'the seeking after wizards that peep and mutter,' 'seeking after a sign,' &c.—a state neither scientific nor religious.

Almost to the last he did not expect to die. No one, however, can feel otherwise than thankful that God mercifully emancipated him, for his brain was mortally injured. The disease was supposed to be abscess in the cerebellum.

He became at times partially paralysed, and his emaciation was as pitiful as his infantine feebleness. The pain he endured was so intense that even he said, 'I would not pass the horrors of last night again for half a lifetime.' But worse to him than the pain was the prostration of all mental force, the obliteration of large spaces from the memory, and the loss of all power of attention. He retained, however, to the last his deep delight in the beauty of God's world. He got up once, when scarcely able to move, at 4 o'clock, and crept to the window 'to see the beautiful morning.' His hope and trust in his Heavenly Father never failed during this dreadful time. He felt assured of his immortality in Christ. A night or two before he died he dreamt that his two sisters, long since dead, came to crown him. 'I saw them,' he said earnestly. Nothing could be more touching than his patience, thoughtfulness for others, and the exquisite and tender gratitude which he showed towards those who attended on him.

Those who had injured him he not only forgave, but was anxious that all

justice should be done them. At the very moment when all around thought that he was dying, he asked, in reference to Mr. Wagner, 'is there anything printed which requires my interference?'

Now and then he rallied, slept a little, and woke, as he said, 'bathed in the morning sunshine, and feeling that recovery was possible.' At these moments his healthy temperament reasserted itself, and he seems to have wished to live longer.

The following letter was written in the beginning of August; but the rally he mentions was but temporary. The terrible pain baffled every effort of the physicians, and he sank rapidly from day to day.

August.

I take advantage of the first rally to write a few lines to you to give an account of myself. Yesterday, after a few hours' sleep I had a sudden and surprising rally; and though I am as weak as water, and can scarcely move a few yards without sighing and sobbing like a baby, I do trust in God I have turned the corner. Such an illness I never had before, and hope never to have again. For twenty-four hours I thought all was over, and Dr. Allen frankly told me he had ceased to be sanguine of my recovery.

2 P.M.

I was obliged to give up writing from exhaustion. I try again. How far the brain is injured God only knows. It is the great *ganglia* or bunches of nerves which are at the roots of the brain that are affected. For many days I have not stirred from my bed, and a hideous-looking ourang-outang I am. Taylor, Whitehouse, Allen—the latter twice, Taylor once—every day; and, as if that were not enough, they have sent for Watson from town. He will be here this evening. God has treated me very mercifully. That I have felt in the direst

pain and deepest exhaustion—the house filled with delicacies, presents which I cannot use, however. How different from the lot of Him who would fain ‘have slaked His morning hunger on green figs!’ I have not been allowed to see any one. Lady Byron left a sick-bed ten days ago to come to see me, and I have only once conversed with her for three minutes. Again I am dizzy, and must stop. I am broken as I never was before; but by God’s mercy I may recover permanently now—nay, even rapidly.

August 12.

I have grown worse and worse every day for the last fortnight. From intensity of suffering in the brain, and utter powerlessness and prostration too dreadful to describe, and the acknowledged anxiety of the medical men, I think now that I shall not get over this. His will be done! I write in torture.

These were the last words he ever wrote. Three days afterwards, on Sunday, the 15th of August, at the age of thirty-seven—in the prime of early manhood—he died. At his own chapel, that morning, when the rumour went round that there was no hope, and God was besought to hear the prayer for him and all sick persons, many wept bitterly; but the greater part of those who loved and venerated him were stunned beyond the power of weeping. That which they greatly feared had come upon them.

The same night his spirit left them. He had passed through the day without intenser suffering than usual. He was moved from his bed to the sofa, near the open window, where he lay until the evening. But towards ten o’clock a change took place. The pain returned with bitter violence. Feebly crying at intervals, ‘My God, my Father—my God, my Father!’ he

lived for two hours in a mortal agony, during which he never lost clear consciousness. His mother, wife, and one friend, with his physician, watched over him with devoted care. At last they sought to relieve him by changing his position. But he could not endure a touch. ‘I cannot bear it,’ he said; ‘let me rest. I must die. Let God do His work.’ These were his last words. Immediately afterwards, at a few minutes past midnight, all was over.

So lived and so died, leaving behind him a great legacy of thought, a noble gentleman, a Christian minister. To the tenderness of a true woman he joined the strong will and the undaunted courage of a true man. With an intellect at home in all the intricacies of modern thought, he combined the simple spirit of a faithful follower of Christ. To daring speculation he united severe and practical labour among men. Living above the world, he did his work in the world. Ardently pursuing after liberty of thought, he never forgot the wise reticence of English conservatism. He preserved, amid a fashionable town, the old virtues of chivalry. In a very lonely and much-tried life he was never false or fearful. Dowered with great gifts of intellect, he was always humble; dowered with those gifts of the heart which are peculiarly perilous to their possessor, he never became their slave. He lived troubled on every side, yet not distressed: perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken: cast down but not destroyed: always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his body. He died, giving up his spirit with his

last words, in faith and resignation to his Father.

He lies in a hollow of the Downs he loved so well. The sound of the waves may be heard there in the distance; and standing by his grave, it seems a fair and fitting requiem; for if the inquietude of the sea was the image of his outward life, its central calm is the image of his deep peace of activity in God. He sleeps well; and we, who are left alone with our love and his great result of work, cannot but rejoice that he has entered into his Father's rest.

HIS FUNERAL.

It was wished by his surviving relatives that the funeral should be strictly private, but they could not resist the general desire of Brighton to record its sorrow. It was understood also that his congregation was anxious to express the feeling of its loss. The members of the local literary societies, of the Mechanics' Institute, the Athenæum, and the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows, severally met, voted addresses of condolence to his family, and asked permission to walk in procession after the remains of their friend and teacher. The funeral took place on Monday, the 23rd of August. It resembled more a public than a private mourning. All the shops along the way from Montpelier Road to the Extramural Cemetery, as well as many in the most frequented streets of Brighton, were closed. The pavements and balconies were crowded with sorrowing spectators. The principal townsmen assumed mourning. All the ministers of the Established Church then in Brighton, and the ministers of the dissenting congregations, met the funeral procession at

the gate of the cemetery. More than two thousand persons followed.

There were united around his tomb, by a common sorrow and common love, Jews, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Quakers, and Churchmen; the working men, the tradesmen, and the rank and wealth of Brighton. For once—and it was a touching testimony to the reality of his work—all classes and all sects merged their differences in one deep feeling.

They have raised above him a simple and massive monument. On two of its sides there are bronze medallions—one given by his congregation, the other by the working-men of Brighton. They record, in touching words, the gratitude of thousands.* The thoughtful affection of the working-men has entrusted to a committee of four the task of keeping, even in winter, flowers always blooming on his grave. They speak to many, who make their pilgrimage to the spot, of the fair immortality which is given to the faithful Soldier of Jesus Christ.

On his Tomb, by his Congregation and Friends:—

M.S.

The Reverend

FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON, M.A.,
Perpetual Curate of Trinity Chapel, Brighton,

Born 3rd of February, 1816;

Died 15th of August, 1853.

Honoured as a Minister,

Beloved as a Man,

He awakened the holiest feelings

In poor and rich, in ignorant and learned;

Therefore is he lamented,

As their guide and comforter,

By many who, in the bond of brotherhood,

And in grateful remembrance,

Have erected this monument.

Glorify to the Saviour, who was his all.

* It may interest some to read the inscriptions placed on Mr. Robertson's Tomb; on the window in Brasenose College; and on the bust in the Bodleian.

By the Working-Men :—

TO THE REV. F. W. ROBERTSON, M.A.,

In grateful remembrance of his sympathy,
And in deep sorrow for their loss,

The Members of the Mechanics' Institution,

And the working-men of Brighton,

Have placed this medallion

On their benefactor's tomb

A.D. 1855.

On the Memorial Window in Brasenose College Chapel :—

FREDERICO GULIELMO ROBERTSON,

Academici et Amici, A.D. 1861.

Above, on a Scroll :—

Te Deum laudat Prophetarum laudabilis
numerus.

On the Bust in the Bodleian Gallery :—

IN MEMORIAM

FREDERICI GULIELMI ROBERTSON,

AMICI POSUERE.

Natus 1816.

Obiit 1853.

CHAPTER XIII.

Robertson's Personal Appearance—Is he to be judged from his Letters or his Sermons?—His passionate Heart and inquiring Intellect—Necessity of Self-expression—The Work of his Life—Results of his Preaching ; of his Labour among the Working-Men—Results of his Life and Teaching as a Clergyman ; as the Uniter of Parties ; the fearless Speaker ; the prudent Christian ; the individual Thinker—Accused of Latitudinarianism and Faithlessness to the Church of England—The unexampled Circulation of his Sermons—Recognition of the Value of his Work since his Death—Subscription at his Funeral—Bust erected in the Pavilion ; in the Bodleian—Memorial Window at Brasenose—Farewell.

NO portrait could give any but an inadequate idea of Frederick Robertson's personal appearance. The photograph with which many are familiar was taken from a daguerreotype, and has imparted a set and rigid form to features which were remarkable for their changing play of expression. The high and intellectual brow, strongly marked, suggested a thoughtful and an artistic nature ; and the blue, deep-set eyes, full of a beautiful pure light, flashing often with a bright and eager lightning of excitement or inquiry, told of the strangely-mingled qualities which lay within—Will, Tenderness, and Courage. The instinctive cheerfulness and sensitiveness of his temperament appeared in a mouth the smile of which was as radiant as its mobile obedience to every change of emotion was wonderful. The same flexibility, brightness, and charm of character were expressed in his slight elastic form,

which, capable of great activity and endurance, seemed to be always inspired with the fire of the thought which possessed him at the time.

The personal advantages with which he was endowed added to his effectiveness in the pulpit. Sometimes, however, they seemed to subtract from it. The very refined face and air, the peculiar—sometimes startling—modulations of the voice, the apparently studied manner, made many, who for the first time heard him preach, condemn him as an 'exquisite,' and fancy that he affected the theatrical graces of a popular preacher. It is impossible to conceive anything more abhorrent to his nature. For instance, he was accustomed, when commencing his closing address with the words, 'My Christian brothers,' to lean forward and allow his right hand to hang carelessly over the desk. On seeing this characteristic attitude reproduced in

one of the portraits made of him when at Brighton, he said to a friend, 'Surely I am never guilty of that?' On being told that it was often adopted, he replied, 'It shall never be so again.' This anecdote marks the man. So far from using any conscious art, tricks of oratory, or effeminate mannerisms to recommend his preaching, he sternly checked the flow of his eloquence when it tended towards redundancy, and refrained even from instinctive gesture. So far from seeking popular admiration, he would have gladly accepted obscure work in an East-End London parish among the lowest poor, if circumstances had enabled him to leave Brighton.

It may be asked whether the truest conception of what he was can be gained from his Letters or from his Sermons. The best reply is, that the Sermons picture what he strove to be, what he was when he felt and acted best, what he would have been had his life been less vexed, his heart less fiery, and his brain less attacked by disease. Of the Letters, some represent him in his happiest and most intellectual moments; others in times of physical weariness, when both intellect and heart were pained with trouble, and beset with questions too hard for him to solve completely; and a few, as in those written from the Tyrol, when his whole being was convulsed in the crisis of a great religious change. They relate his inward trials; his sermons bear witness to his contest and his victory. Only when both are read, and balanced one against the other, can an adequate conception be formed of what he was. On account of the overstrained self-depreciation which sometimes possessed him, especially after the intellectual excite-

ment of Sunday, it is not possible to take his own estimation of himself in his letters as representing the whole truth.

No man ought to be judged by his own record of his inner life—no man ought to be judged entirely out of his own mouth. Far from being too lenient, men of Mr. Robertson's temper are too severe upon themselves. They write in deep pain from the impulse of the moment: and then, when they have got rid of the pain by its expression, pass out of their study into an outdoor life of such activity and vigour, that no one would imagine that an hour before they had been writing as if they were useless in their generation, and their existence a burden too galling to be borne.

On reading his correspondence, some may accuse him of indicating too strongly his loneliness and passionate desire of sympathy; they may call his fancies diseased, his complaints unmanly, and his transient doubts unchristian. But his faithlessness was but momentary: only the man who can become at one with Frederick Robertson's strange and manifold character, and can realise as he did the agony and sin of the world,—only the man who can feel the deepest pain and the highest joy, as Robertson could have felt them—has either the right or the capability of judging him. Doubts did cross his mind, but they passed over it as clouds across the sun. The glowing heart which lay behind soon dissipated them by its warmth.

With regard to his passionate desires and his complaint, they were human, and would have been humanly wrong in him only if he had allowed them to gain predominance over his will,

righteously bent all through his life, not on their extinction, but on their subjugation. The untroubled heart is not the deepest, the stern heart not the noblest, the heart which crushes all expression of its pain not that which can produce the most delicate sympathy, the most manifold teaching, or speak so as to give the greatest consolation. Had not Robertson often suffered, and suffered so much as to be unable sometimes to suppress a cry, his sermons would never have been the deep source of comfort and of inspiration which they have proved to thousands. The very knowledge that one who worked out the voyage of his life so truly and so firmly, could so suffer and so declare his suffering, is calculated to console and strengthen many who endure partially his pain and loneliness, but who have not, as yet, resisted so victoriously; whose temperament is morbid, but who have not, as yet, subdued it to the loving and healthy cheerfulness of his Christian action.

Nor can those who should thus accuse him ever have conceived what that character is which *must* express itself, or ever have realised that there are times when expression is necessary if life is to continue. Such a necessity belongs almost always to the poetic temperament, and appears nowhere so much as in the Psalms. They are full of David's complaints against his destiny. They tell of his long and lonely nights, his tears, his sufferings at the hands of men, his doubts of Eternal Justice; and it is through the relief afforded by this natural expression of impassioned feeling that he gains calm enough to see into 'the way of the Lord,' and to close his Psalms of sorrow with words of triumphant trust. It was just so with

Frederick Robertson. The expression of his distress neither injured his manliness nor subtracted from his Christian faith. It was the safety-valve by which he freed himself from feeling under too high a pressure not to be dangerous, and brought himself into that balanced state in which active and profitable work is possible. One of the most important things to remark in his life is, that a man may *retain* high-wrought sentiment, passionate feelings, imaginations and longings almost too transcendental, a sensitiveness so extreme as to separate him from almost all sympathy—and at the same time subdue all so as to do his Father's Will in the minutest as well as the largest duties. But I repeat, without the 'timely utterance which gave his thoughts relief,' he could not have been strong enough to do the work of his life—a work distinctive and great, but the results of which do not lie so openly on the surface of society as to be manifest at once to the careless glance of the public. It is necessary, therefore, to close this book with some account of it.

The results of his preaching upon the intellectual men who attended his congregation have already been dwelt on. On those whose tendency was towards scepticism the effect of his sermons was remarkable. 'I never hear him,' said one, 'without some doubt being removed, or some difficulty solved.' Young men who had boasted publicly of doubts which were an inward terror to them, could not resist the attractive power of his teaching, and fled to him to disclose the history of their hearts, and to find sympathy and guidance. Nor was his influence less upon that large class whose religion grows primarily out of

emotion, for he combined in himself two powers which generally weaken one another—the power of close and abstract thinking, and the power of deep and intense feeling.

The most visible portion of the labour of his life was among the working-men. He bound fifteen hundred of them together in a bond of mutual help; he united them—men of a class which is jealous of church interference—in reverence for his character as a minister and as a Christian man, while at the same time he invariably bade them look away from him to his Master.

This is a part of his work the results of which cannot be calculated. No one can tell, who has not had something to do with mechanics' institutes, what genius, patience, charity, and width of sympathy were necessary to achieve this. His lectures, and his mode of conducting the controversy with the radical party in the Association, have had a wide and beneficial effect upon similar associations in England, not only as an inspiration to the men, but as a warning and a guide to the promoters and committees. The fearless confidence in truth and in human nature with which he met the socialistic difficulties and sceptical opinions among the working classes, has given to clergymen who come into contact with the same classes an example and a lesson for which they have to thank him.

Of all the small band who in 1848, '49, and '50 set themselves to remedy the evils which oppressed the poor mechanic, he has had the greatest influence. At that time he saw more clearly than the others both sides of the question. His conduct was wiser, but not less bold. While in other

quarters the breach between rich and poor was at least temporarily widened, in Brighton it was narrowed. By patient explanation to both sides of the temptations and trials which beset the one or the other, and by showing that there *was* a bridge across the social gulf, he drew the divided classes together, and succeeded more than any man of his time in promoting their reconciliation. He was also one of the first and most active, though one of the most unknown, advocates of the rights of labouring men to all the means of acquiring knowledge; and he held up the banner of their rights at an epoch when it was most dangerous to his own peace to do so, and most profitable for them. But his fearlessness in the cause of all freedom and justice gave him the clear insight which sees the right moment to advance, even though, as in 1848, the confusion of battle may be at its height.

As a clergyman, by his clear elucidation of the truths common to all, but lying beneath widely-differing forms of opinion, he has done much to bring about a spirit of religious union among the various parties of the Church. He has assisted, by his teaching, in the great work of this day—the preservation of the Church of England as a Church in which all the members vary in views, mode of action, and character of teaching, but are one in faith, one in aim, and one in spirit; for he dreaded that genuine Low Churchism which seeks to force upon all the members of a Church a set of limited opinions about illimitable truths.

As a clergyman he has also brought distinctly forward the duty of fearlessness in speaking. 'I desire for myself,' he says, 'that I may be true and fearless, but still more that I may mix

gentleness and love with fearlessness.' He was not one who held what are called liberal opinions in the study, but would not bring them into the pulpit. He did not waver between truth to himself and success in the world. He was offered advancement in the Church, if he would abate the strength of his expressions with regard to the Sabbath. He refused the proffer with sternness. Far beyond all the other perils which beset the Church was, he thought, this peril—that men who were set apart to speak the truth and to live above the world should substitute conventional opinions for eternal truths—should prefer ease to conscience, and worldly honour to that which cometh from God only.

He has taught also by his ministerial life the duty and the practice of that prudence which fitly balances courage. He was not one of the radicals of English polemics. His was not that spirit, too much in vogue at present among the so-called Liberal party—the spirit of Carlstadt, and not of Luther; the spirit of men who blame their leaders for not being forward enough, who desire blindly to pull down the whole edifice of 'effete opinions,' and who, inspired by the ardour and by some of the folly of youth, think that they can at once root up the tares without rooting up the wheat also. Robertson, on the contrary, seems to have clearly seen, or at least to have acted as if he saw, that the question of true outward religious liberty in a national Church was to be solved in the same manner as England had solved the question of solid-set Political Liberty—by holding on to the old as long as possible, so as to retain all its good; by never embarking in the new till it had become a necessity of the age; and by 'broaden-

ing slowly down from precedent to precedent,' and by recognising the universal truth hidden in that saying, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' He clung, for example, to certain theories which seem incongruous with the rest of his views—which seem strange to many of us now, just because we forget that England and the Church are ten years older since his death. He refused to discuss thoroughly questions which we bring forward prominently. He purposed, for example, writing a book on Inspiration. He refrained;—'the mind of England,' said he, 'is not ready yet.' But if he were alive now, he would write it. I have already said that he would never bring forward in the pulpit an opinion which was only fermenting in his mind. He waited till the must became wine. He endeavoured, as far as in him lay, without sacrificing truth, not to shock by startling opinions the minds of those who were resting peacefully in an 'early heaven and in happy views.' He refrained in all things from violating a weak brother's conscience. He would have hated the vaunting way with which some put forward novel views. He would have hated the pharisaical liberalism which says, 'God, I thank Thee I am not as other men are, even as this believer in the universality of the Flood, or that in the eternal obligation of the Jewish Sabbath.' He would have disliked such a term as 'free-handling;' and as strongly as he reprobated the irreverent boldness of those who speak as if they were at home in all the counsels of God, would he have blamed the irreverent licence with which some writers have rushed at things held sacred by thousands of our fellow-Christians.

In one respect especially his life has a lesson for the Church of this time. He has shown that a well-marked individuality is possible in the English Church. The great disadvantage of a Church like ours—with fixed traditions, with a fixed system of operation, with a theological education which is exceedingly conservative, with a manner of looking at general subjects from a fixed clerical point of view, with a bias to shelter and encourage certain definite forms of thinking—is, that under its government clergymen tend to become all of one pattern. It may be said, and with truth, that the advantages of our system more than balance this disadvantage. Nevertheless, it is a disadvantage which is becoming more and more felt by clergymen and recognised by laymen. And one of the strongest impulses which have given rise to the present theological struggle, is the desire of men in holy orders to become more distinctly individual. Robertson anticipated by some years this deep-set feeling. He was himself, and not a fortuitous concurrence of other men. Owing to his individuality, he retained the freedom of action and the diversity of feeling which men not only in the Church, but in every profession and business, so miserably lose when they dress their minds in the fashion of current opinion, and look at the world, at nature, and at God, through the glass which custom so assiduously smokes.

Robertson preserved his independence of thought. He had a strong idiosyncrasy, and he let it loose within the bounds of law—a law not imposed upon him from without by another, but freely chosen by himself as the best. He developed, without rejecting the help of others, his own character

after his own fashion. He respected his own conscience: believed in his own native force, and in the Divine fire within him. He looked first at everything submitted to his judgment as if it were a new thing upon earth, and then permitted the judgments of the past to have their due weight with him. He endeavoured to receive, without the intervention of commentators, immediate impressions from the Bible. To these impressions he added the individual life of his own heart, and his knowledge of the life of the great world. He preached these impressions, and with a freedom, independence, variety, and influence which were the legitimate children of his individuality.

That men should, within the necessary limits, follow out their own character, and refuse to submit themselves to the common mould, is the foremost need of the age in which we live; and if the lesson which Robertson's life teaches in this respect can be received, if not by all, at least by his brethren, he will neither have acted nor taught in vain.

Of course, developing his own thoughts and life freely, he was charged by his opponents with faithlessness to the Church, and with latitudinarian opinions. But he rejoiced in finding within the Church of England room to expand his soul, and freedom for his intellect. He discovered the way to escape from the disadvantage I have mentioned, and yet to remain a true son of a Church which he loved and honoured to the last. Moreover, he brought many into the Church of England; both Unitarians and Quakers, as well as men of other sects, were admitted by him into her communion. On the other

hand, if the latter part of the accusation were true, and he was latitudinarian in opinion, it is at least remarkable that he should have induced in those who heard him profitably, not only a spiritual life, but also a high and punctilious morality. His hearers kept the Law all the better from being freed from the Law. And many a working man in Brighton, many a business man in London, many a young officer, many a traveller upon the Continent, many a one living in the great world of politics or in the little world of fashion, can trace back to words heard in Trinity Chapel the creation in them of a loftier idea of moral action, and an abiding influence which has made their lives, in all their several spheres, if not religious, at least severely moral.

These are some of the results which have flowed, and will continue to flow, from his work and his life. They have been propagated by means of his published sermons. The extension of these sermons among *all* classes has been almost unexampled. Other sermons have had a larger circulation, but it has been confined within certain circles. These have been read and enjoyed by men of every sect and of every rank. They seem to come home to that human heart which lies beneath all our outward differences. Working men and women have spoken of them to me with delight. Clergymen of the most opposed views to his keep them in their bookcases and on their desks. Dissenting preachers speak of them with praise. Men of the business-world have written to say that they have felt in reading them that Christianity was a power and a life, and that its spirit was that of a sound mind. Men whose intellect has been

wearied with our pulpit sameness or our pulpit sentiment, light upon them and read them through. All sections of the press — even those of such widely-separated principles as the *Guardian* and the *Westminster Review* — have expressed, even while they disagreed with their views, sympathy with their Christian feeling and noble thought. There has, however, been one conspicuous exception: the *Record* newspaper has been faithful to its nature.

Fifteen editions of the first volume of his sermons have been published, thirteen of the second, and thirteen of the third.* In themselves, these figures bear testimony to the great acceptability of Mr. Robertson's teaching. But the value of his work has been otherwise recognised. At a meeting held immediately after his death, it was resolved to raise a subscription for the purpose of testifying, in some adequate manner, the reverence in which his friends held his worth, and the sympathy which they wished to offer to his family. In less than a fortnight, eleven hundred pounds were raised, and placed in the hands of trustees for the benefit of his children. Of this sum Lady Byron contributed three hundred pounds. The two children, who are thus connected with the love and gratitude given to their father, are still alive to cherish his name and to rejoice in his far-spread influence. His daughter is named Ida Florence Geraldine Robertson; and his son, Charles Boyd Robertson, was educated at Harrow, and, through the

* The sermons have reached their ninth edition in America; one volume has been already translated into German, and published at Mannheim.

instrumentality of the late Lord Carlisle, obtained a nomination from Earl Russell to the Foreign Office, which he entered in January, 1865.

Since his death, other public testimonies have been made to his memory. A gentleman who had found by chance upon a friend's table a volume of the sermons, was so touched by their beauty, that he commissioned a sculptor to execute for him a bust of the preacher. He presented this, with peculiar delicacy, to the Pavilion at Brighton, that the town in which Robertson had done the work of his life might have a lasting memorial of his presence. A few years ago, some men of his own college expressed their desire to erect in the chapel of Brasenose a window to his memory. A subscription was set on foot: many outside as well as within Oxford were glad to join in this graceful tribute, and the sun shines now through the letters of his name upon the spot where he dedicated his youth to God. Nor has the University been unmindful of one whose powers of thinking were trained within its walls: among the marble images of the great men who are honoured by a place in the Bodleian, his bust is also to be seen.

But far beyond these outward tributes of respect, a more perennial one than all, is the epistle written by this man of God upon our hearts. That which God had given him, he has left to us. His spirit lives again in others; his thoughts move many, whom he never saw, on to noble ends. Unconsciously he blesses, and has blest. Yet not unconsciously now: I rejoice to think that now, at least, he is freed from the dark thought which oppressed his life—that his ministry was a failure. I rejoice to think that he knows now—in that high Land where he is doing, with all his own vividness of heart, ampler work than his weary spirit could have done on earth—that his apparent defeat here was real Victory; that through him the Spirit of all Goodness has made men more true, more loving, and more pure. His books may perish, his memory fade, his opinions be superseded, as, in God's progressive education of the Universal Church, we learn to see more clearly into Truths, the relations of which are now obscure; but the Work which he has done upon human hearts is as imperishable as his own Immortality in God.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

DURING the preparation of this biography, many of Mr. Robertson's personal friends have sent to me brief accounts of their relations with him, and their several estimates of his character. It has struck me that perhaps the best mode of making use of these letters is to arrange them here in an Appendix, where they can be seen together. They agree and disagree, but their very disagreement will throw light upon some of Robertson's characteristics. They are remarkable, with two exceptions, for their absence of anecdote or of any description of his external life or peculiarities. Indeed, the great difficulty of making his biography interesting is, that he seems to have impressed himself so strongly on men as the thinker—as a spiritual essence—that what he did and said in outward life fell into the shade. Every one writes about his character—few remember anecdotes in illustration of his character. He seems, if I may so express it, to have been rather *felt* than *seen* by men.

The first letter is written by a college friend, and gives an account of him which is interesting from the prominence in which it sets his youthful idealism; the second pictures vividly the impression he made at Cheltenham; the third is an extract from a letter from one of his congregation at Brighton whom he frequently visited,

and gives some idea of his relation to the world of society; the fourth gives an estimate of him from a clerical point of view; the fifth is a recollection of his mode of life in a country-house; the sixth describes him as he appeared to its writer during the last year of his career; and the last, the seventh, interesting not only for the love and earnestness with which it is written, but also for the vivid description which it gives of the service in Trinity Chapel, is especially worth reading for the details which it supplies of some of the last weeks of the life of Mr. Robertson.

LETTER A.

Odiham Vicarage: July 28, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR,—You have assigned me no easy task in asking for recollections of an old college friend, after a lapse of more than twenty years. I became acquainted with F. W. Robertson very soon after his entrance at Brasenose College, Oxford, by meeting him at the rooms of the Rev. H. B. W. Churton, at that time a fellow and tutor in the college. His ardent temperament, his vivid imagination, his earnestness and purity of mind, his lofty aspirations after whatsoever things were true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report—in short, his eager thirst for moral and intellectual improvement, rendered him a most interesting companion.

His intellect was above the common order; and the deeper tone of thought, the

naturally pensive feelings of his soul, made the mere social, festive, light-hearted circle of Oxford companionship uncongenial to his taste, and unsuited to his delicate, refined, and perhaps over-sensitive disposition.

His friends were sought among the thinking, the literary, the devout-minded, and intellectual men of his day. Light and trivial or foolish conversation was always most abhorrent to him. His idea and endeavour with respect to social enjoyment were mental gain or spiritual improvement. He was dissatisfied, and even uncomfortable, restless, and unhappy, unless from the company and society of friends he could feel that he had either derived or imparted some solid, lasting gain, either in point of information or of clearer perspicuity on any subject of abiding interest. Progress was his watchword, improvement his aim.

Mere recreation or mere amusement was regarded by him as little better than waste of time. The common every-day talk, the joke, the sharp repartee of men fresh from public schools and elated with youthful spirits, found no sympathy in his breast, and were positively distasteful to him. He would often say, with emphasis, 'To think that men should have nothing better to converse about than all this trash!' His turn of mind led him to an almost contemptuous dislike for what he called 'the froth, the scum, the vanity of all these things!'

But with all this loftiness of mind, feeling, and aspiration, instead of a halo of brightness there was often a mist of sadness and disappointment hovering over his soul, which damped the ardour of his spirits and checked his joyousness.

On entering on a college life, his glowing imagination had raised an ideal in his mind so high, that it could hardly fail to produce a reaction of feeling after testing the reality of actual experience. He had anticipated a more elevated standard of manners and morals than he afterwards found in existence. His preconceived notion of Oxford lectures

and tutors, as well as of the society of the undergraduates and other members of the university, was a high degree of perfection and of intellectual superiority.

Every lecture was to be a concentrated mass of learning, every tutor a paragon of excellence; every party and every social circle in Oxford were to be redolent with wit, powerful in logical argument, abounding in scientific and philosophical conversation.

His own pure, noble, and lofty wishes were partly parental to the idea; and then his soaring spirit, his fervid imagination, painted up that preconceived idea in colours too bright, too vivid for earth. He had looked for an Italian sky, and for the sunny genial warmth, as it were, of an Italian climate, but he found, amid much that was bright and beautiful, fogs and vapours intermingled, which he had not anticipated. He met with storms as well as sunshine. The lesson was a painful one, but most profitable. While it somewhat damped the glow of his heart, and cast a tinge of melancholy over his soul, it rendered him a more practical man—it led him to see that here we must be satisfied to fight our way onward through difficulties, darkness, and misunderstandings.

This was the secret, this was the origin of that strain of sorrowful disappointed feeling which runs through his sermons. It was the language of one who had learned by sorrowful experience that all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and this fitted him in a peculiar manner to address with power those who, still absorbed in the world's busy and engaging round of business and pleasures, had not as yet been taught the same lesson. He spake the things which he had seen and heard and felt, and there was consequently a telling influence in what he said. I well remember on one occasion, after gathering around him a breakfast-party of reading and rising men—men of acknowledged intelligence and information—the distress and almost disgust with which, subsequent to the breaking up of the party,

he commented upon the tone of the conversation, which had not risen so high, or proved so intellectual and improving, as he had anticipated from the class and character of the men selected for invitation.

He would make little or no allowance for the feeling of desire, in hardworking and reading men, for relief from severe studies in the social enjoyment of free unconstrained intercourse. He could not sympathise with them in the buoyant ebullition of youthful spirits, which must have its fling. But this turn of thought and tone of mind were in another respect a hindrance to the success of his university course, with regard to obtaining the honours to which his talents would undoubtedly have entitled him, if he could only have brought his mind to exercise those powers in the ordinary way necessary for securing academical honours. He could not bring himself to descend to all the minute accuracies of grammar and of philological lore essential to form a finished scholar. It was the same with many of the technicalities and minutæ of science, without which the knowledge required for the examination-schools could not be mastered. To spend precious hours upon such comparative trifles appeared to him a waste of valuable time and of mental power as well. He felt disappointed that the examinations should depend, in a manner, upon an accurate acquaintance with all these elements, these little niceties of language, these minute points and distinctions in philological, scientific, and philosophical subjects; instead of depending merely upon enlarged views, original ideas, and exalted sentiments arising out of a comprehensive and intellectual grasp of such matters by a reasoning and powerful mind. In preference, therefore, to fettering the mind, as he considered, by working in the tramway marked out for honours in the wisdom of the university, he allowed others of inferior powers to pass by him, and to attain those rewards of diligence and mental cultiva-

tion while he was climbing over the rocks on a path of his own.

I remember on one occasion the great disgust he expressed at a man of a very superior mind and of undoubted talent being actually plucked in the public schools at the final examination for lack of technical information and want of accuracy, while he saw the testamur handed to many others of inferior powers of mind, who had earned it by common care, industry, and perseverance. He did not at that time perceive how much of valuable training, disciplining, and strengthening the mind, as well as of increasing its natural endowments, were involved in all this minuteness and accuracy of detail.

Thus the very brilliancy of his talents proved a stumbling-block in the way of his carrying off those rewards which his friends would have desired for him, and which they saw, under ordinary circumstances, might undoubtedly have been made his own. Neither academical honours nor Oxford society came up to the high standard he had preconceived, and his thoughts were then directed onwards to the great work of the ministry, and to preparation for it. His exalted notions of Holy Orders and of the high privileges and blessings in connection with the office of the ministry in the Church, again led him to look forward with zest and pleasurable anticipation to coming spiritual and intellectual enjoyment; and although there was much of this in his after-course, yet even here he experienced in the actual reality that 'Hope told a flattering tale.'

Upon the subject of religion, his inquiring mind was always in search of truth. With an early education in what is termed the Evangelical school, he brought an unbiassed and unprejudiced spirit to bear upon this all-important matter.

In Oxford he was an attentive and diligent hearer of teachers and of preachers differing considerably in views and sentiments. He attended the ministry on the one hand of Mr. Champneys at St. Ebbe's,

and on the other hand of Mr. Newman at St. Mary's. He had as yet marked out for himself no distinctive line of religious sentiments, but the earnest, anxious question of his mind was, 'What is truth?'

He saw much that struck him as excellent and desirable in both parties. He felt keenly, moreover, that there were deficiencies in each. He wished to amalgamate what he saw that was good, excellent, and scriptural in one system, with what he saw to be devotional and stricter in form and discipline in another. He desired, with an enlarged mind and unprejudiced spirit, to embrace the excellences of both, without becoming addicted to either—without allowing himself to be a party-man.

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.

But the tendencies of his mind as well as his early training led him to lean more to the tenets and doctrines of the Reformers. He took special delight also in scriptural and Greek Testament readings, and in devotional exercises afforded him and others from time to time in Mr. Churton's rooms. These seasons often proved a solace to his anxious and restless spirit: they refreshed his soul by leading him directly to the fountain of wisdom and consolation.

He derived much advantage, moreover, from the instructions of the senior tutor in the college—soon after the vice-principal of Brasenose, the Rev. T. T. Churton. From him he frequently received most friendly cautions and warnings with regard to the dangers and erratic tendencies of Tractarianism, as it gradually unfolded and developed itself into its distinctive features. In his rooms he often fell in with kindred spirits to himself, and greatly enjoyed the friendly and social gatherings of dons and undergraduates brought together by Mr. Churton's kindness and hospitality.

He was greatly indebted to the instructions of this valuable tutor for the views and sentiments which he carried with him from Oxford into the ministry, and from which he did not diverge until after the

close of his ministry in Cheltenham and the commencement of his labours in Brighton.

Yours very sincerely,
T. G. CLARKE,
Vicar of Odiham.

LETTER B.

Lansdown Lodge, Cheltenham :
February, 21, 1865.

DEAR SIR,—I have already explained to you that I was not intimately acquainted with the Rev. F. Robertson. My intercourse with him was casual and limited. Occasionally I met him in private society, and entertaining, as I did from the first, the greatest admiration of his character and abilities, never lost an opportunity of conversing with him. But he was so much engaged in the performance of his duties, as the curate of a large district in this town, that these opportunities were few and far between; and thus, I regret to say, I can do little towards the elucidation of the comparatively short period of his life during which I had the privilege of personal communication with him, beyond giving a general description of the main points in his character as they appeared to me.

I always considered that he possessed, in a remarkable and pre-eminent degree, a combination of three qualities—courage, gentleness, and liberality or tolerance. As regards the first, I believe him to have been, both physically and morally, one of the bravest men that ever lived. Had it been his lot to have followed the military profession (for which I have understood he was originally intended), he would probably, with opportunities, have attained the highest eminence in it. His presence was commanding though his figure was slight, and his dark eye glanced with a mixture of fire and softness which indicated at once that he was no ordinary man. There was nothing which he would have shrunk from saying or doing in the interest of truth or

justice, for either of which he would willingly have undergone martyrdom.

At the same time his gentleness was as great as his courage. Even the very tones of his voice bespoke the fact. Conscious of his great and commanding abilities, he must have been conscious too (for he had proof of it in their acts) of the bitter jealousy which his superiority excited in the minds of some of those with whom he had to deal. But notwithstanding his extreme sensitiveness, which must have made him feel deeply the treatment he received, no acrimonious expression, so far as I am aware, ever escaped his lips; and the tone in which he spoke of these things was ever that of one who prayed that his enemies might be forgiven, as not knowing what they did. He was totally devoid of pride or assumption; and though his mind was stored with thoughts on every subject usually discussed by thinking men, he was as ready, perhaps more ready, to listen than to speak. But when he did speak, you felt at once that he was speaking from the heart; what he said was plainly and simply expressed, as might be expected where the speaker was candid and sincere, free from affectation, egotism, or pedantry of any kind.

But perhaps the grandest features of his character were liberality and toleration. He was an ardent seeker after truth, and having found it, would have defended it with his life. But if ever a man was aware of the difficulty of finding truth, it was he; if ever a man was aware of his own and others' fallibility, it was he. It may be doubted whether, in the whole of his writings, a single word, or a single expression, can be found displaying a spirit of dogmatism or denunciation. Possibly the natural liberality of his mind may have been encouraged and increased by the antagonism which he felt to the intense bigotry of which he was not unfrequently a witness. Exemplifications of this spirit of liberality, the more remarkable as being in opposition to the common prejudices of

many around him, may be found in those of his sermons which treat of the 'Sunday Question,' in his remarks on Shelley in the 'Lectures on Poetry,' and in the fact, which I well remember, that when, many years since, a renegade Roman Catholic priest visited Cheltenham for the purpose of pouring forth loud-tongued and reckless abuse upon the religion he had forsown—when he was attended and listened to by admiring and sympathetic crowds, however unable to comprehend the Italian language in which he spoke—no persuasion would induce Robertson to follow in the wake. With a pleasant smile he would ask what weight could be attached to the ravings of a Protestant priest who had deserted *his* religion—a question to which I am not aware that he ever received a reply.

When he died, I believe that they who had had the privilege of knowing him even so slightly as I did, felt that a man was gone who had been, and would have continued to be, a light to the world; and who, if not in a worldly, certainly in a spiritual and intellectual sense, would have reached an eminence as high as has been attained by any of the greatest men that England ever saw. For his intellect was ever expanding, and it may be doubted whether, when he was removed, that intellect had attained its full development and possible maturity. Even during the period during which I knew him here, attending the church in which he preached, there was a marked progress in his power of thought, expression, and delivery.

I may add, as a very subordinate point, that from specimens which I have seen of his Greek composition, evincing exquisite taste and great grammatical accuracy, there seems little doubt that he might have attained the highest academical distinction. But he felt that he was destined for higher and better things than running in an academical groove, and becoming even a great classical scholar. I mention the fact, not as thinking thereby to add anything to the lustre of his intellectual character, but

because I am unwilling to omit anything known to me regarding him.

I should have been glad if I could have made this short and imperfect sketch more adequate to the subject with which I have attempted to deal. But having been requested to contribute something to so grand an object as the elucidation of the character of such a man, I could not, in justice either to the living or the dead, refuse—even though the contribution were, as it is, but a mite.

His saltem accumulæ donis, et fungar inani Munere.

I am, dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

W. DOBSON.

LETTER C (EXTRACT).

Brighton.

He used to fight continually on the 'Woman's Right' question, and I used to delight in rousing his ire by one or two things he detested—by making a casual use of slang, by dashing my words in writing, by punning, in which latter delinquency he used himself to indulge at times. I do not think he was ever humorous so much as witty—not that I attempt to define the much-vexed difference between wit and humour—but I should say that his fun shone and sparkled rather than warmed and glowed; and ever and anon—and almost always when one got in earnest—there rose up that tinge of bitterness which seemed to underlie all his estimate of human character and events. His own experience, I suppose, was at war with his aspirations. This struggle, I fancy, was what made him so painfully interesting. I used to think, especially when I first knew him, that his conversation was pitched in too high a key for general society, and he certainly wanted that little vulgar social sympathy which harmonises all by tuning oneself only to the 'third' above and not to the 'octave.'

He read out better than ever man read;

he never preached but he always elevated and spiritualised every subject, and I never met any one so deferential and gentle in argument: he never pooh-poohed a remark, but always listened and carried on our remarks—never forced on us more than we seemed likely to take in comfortably. He had the rare art of giving comfort, advice, and even blame with such almost humble gentleness, such entire freedom from any assumption of superiority, that it could not wound the sorest heart, nor irritate even the most rebellious spirit.

I think a touch of geniality or of sensuousness would have improved his character, but perhaps my materialistic tendency misleads me there, and a tinge of asceticism may be a necessary element in all apostleship.

* * * *

The following letter of Mr. Robertson's will illustrate some of the points dwelt on in the above extract: his gentleness in refusal, his impatience with fruitless enthusiasm, his stern views of the world, and his feelings on the subject of the 'Rights of Women':—

DEAR MADAM,—I regret exceedingly to be unable to take the part you ask me to do in obtaining signatures to Lord Shaftesbury's petition. I should be sorry that my refusal should be construed into want of sympathy in this great cause of charity and right, or into inability to appreciate warmly and admiringly the motives of ladies who like yourself have signed the paper. His would be a cold heart, indeed, who did not acknowledge proudly and gratefully the promptness of his countrywomen to feel rightly on all great questions, and to join in all generous works. But I humbly venture to differ from Lord Shaftesbury as to the expediency of this pressing mode of attempting to meet the evil.

First it is known to be the result of a burst of feeling produced by a book, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' which by thousands

in America is considered an exaggerated statement of the case, and has produced much exasperation of feeling in the Southern States. *I* do not believe it to be exaggerated: it merely exhibits what under such laws is for ever possible, and must be often fact. But the Americans deny it: and in the heated state of feeling produced by the book *I* fear that a remonstrance known to be grounded on its allegations, or roused by its pictures of slavery, would produce resentment instead of conviction, and only harden the American ladies in their resolve to maintain the institution. For, strange to say, it is the American ladies—for ladies are conservatives ever of the things that be—who are said to be most vehement in the upholding of the institution: the ladies and the clergy—for, alas! the appeal on Christian grounds which the address contains has been answered, they say, already a thousand times by the arguments with which the clergy have indoctrinated the slaveholders and their wives and daughters. Of this there are abundant traces in ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin.’

In the first place, *I* feel convinced that the American reply will be: Look at home—look at Ireland—look at the pauperism of England, more frightful than slavery! What, are the highborn ladies of England who saunter life away in Belgravia and Tyburnia, leaving their own slaves uncared for, stimulated by a novel into a burst of virtuous indignation which costs them nothing beyond the trouble of signing a paper and the pleasurable excitement of the agitation, and pledges them to nothing beyond the easy task of calling on others to do good? *I* know that to hundreds who will sign the address this will not apply, but *I* confess that even *I*, an Englishman, should be forced to acknowledge it to be a fair retort to thousands.

Once more, you will forgive me for saying that while *I* hope earnestly for an increasing dignity and breadth to be given to the position of woman by the spirit of

the Gospel, *I* am not yet quite American enough to feel quite reconciled to the idea of the public conferences and agitations and excitement which a measure like this involves in the female world. *I* do not put this forward as a real objection, *I* admit it to be perhaps an old-fashioned prejudice, and if there were no other objection, it should not stand in the way of my co-operating in a good cause. My only excuse for this long letter is my wish not to appear discourteous or abrupt in declining to comply with your request.

I am, dear Madam,

Your obedient servant,

F. W. R.

LETTER D.

MY DEAR SIR,—As *I* understand your letter, you ask me to add something to the materials now being collected for a ‘Life of Robertson.’ *I* wish *I* could send something worthy of such an object; but my incapability of writing all that *I* feel about him is my fair excuse for not giving more than what follows. It is right at the same time that *I* remind you that my friendship with him was, strictly speaking, a clerical friendship, and that he hardly spoke to *me* upon any other subject than that which directly or indirectly touched upon a clergyman’s duties.

First of all, *I* will declare that, though he was not faultless any more than other human beings, he was, without exception, the most faultless clergyman *I* have ever known. It is easy to trace how this comparative clerical faultlessness had its original spring—in (1) his strict obedience to his father’s will that he should take Holy Orders and sacrifice the Army, in which his heart was; and (2) in his exceeding truthfulness of character. These two points ran through his life—Self-sacrifice and truth. ‘If *I* am to be a clergyman,’ was the language of his thoughts, ‘*I* will do my best to be a clergyman in reality, even though *I* have no preference for the pro-

cession.' With this determination before him, he told me he prepared for ordination; and amongst other studies before he left college he literally learnt by heart the whole of the New Testament, not only in English but in Greek; and so completely did he devote himself to stiff theological study for the examination of the Bishop of Winchester, that he sought relaxation to his mind before the day of ordination by reading Wordsworth's 'Excursion' as his orisons. 'Some clergymen,' he said, 'would think it strange to do this. It was my refreshment.'

His favourite private prayer-book was Bishop Andrewes' 'Devotions,' which he used until he found his wants more perfectly expressed by the language of his own copiously flowing thoughts. His love for the Holy Bible was exceedingly remarkable, and especially for those parts which are (as he expressed it himself) full of Christ; and it is worth recording that, upon one occasion, he remarked to me that the longer he lived the more fond he became of turning to the four Gospels by preference—a fact borne out by the list of his sermons.

But Robertson was pre-eminently the clergyman of thought. He would wring his very brain for the sake of those pure thoughts which abound throughout his writings. And yet it was not for the sake of exalting the intellect above religion that he did this, but in order to make the fullest use of the great faculties which God had blessed him withal. I was curate of Hurstpierpoint in 1851, and having at heart the opening of a parish reading-room, I applied to my friend to assist me with an address. His generosity encouraged the request, but it was with difficulty that I could prevail upon him to sacrifice any time from his congregation. 'My congregation must come first,' he repeated: and then he rapidly sketched the amount of work which was demanded of him, in order that I might understand his sermons to be the chief object of his work—not his

lectures, because intellect ought to bend to Christianity.

I am not fulsome in my language of him, when I say that the spirit of Christ saturated everything he said and did. For my own part, I have never learnt so much of the mind of Christ, and what is meant by following Christ, as from him. Like his *Master* (as he fearlessly loved to call the Saviour, in whatever company he was), he had two distinct sides to his character. Perfectly conscious of his great mental powers, and very modest about introducing them except where plain duty obliged him, he was ready to acknowledge excellence and rarity of endowments in every one who possessed them, and to judge of others who had them not in a kindly spirit. There was a *daring* in him to speak what he was persuaded was truth, which was quite unsubject to the good or bad opinions of the world. Yet this fearlessness was always governed by a most *generous* charity. If he mentioned the name of any one whose life offended him, he was sure to make me see the good in the person as well as the vice. If he spoke of any one who differed with him in religion, he was bent upon my seeing that he loved the individual while he hated his false faith. To the Church of England he was affectionately attached: he regarded it as the best form of Christianity in the world, but he would never refuse to recognise what was true and good in those outside it. I well remember the substance of his words in conversation with me on this point:—'There is only *one* thing we have to wage a perpetual war with—sin and wrong, in whomsoever found—Churchman, Roman Catholic, or Protestant Dissenter. There is only *one* thing we should wish to see either in ourselves or in others—the love of Christ; and in whomsoever a *spark* merely of this love is found, whether in one whom we have regarded as awfully wicked, or in one whom we have looked on as not enjoying the same superior light with ourselves—one branded by the hard name of Papist, or a

Greek, or a Dissenter, or an Arian; if in any of these the love of Christ is found, showing itself in the adoration and the worship of Him,'—and then, I remember well, he added, with a tone which has fixed these words exactly upon my memory, 'Oh, if I could adore Him and love Him and serve Him as some of these do, I should be a different person to what I am now! Then, while we hold fast our own opinion and be ready to die for it, we must acknowledge *this good* in those who differ from us—we must rejoice that Christ is received. We call this person by that name, and that person by this; but God does not regard the names we may give to this one or that, to this form or that, to this faction or that. He only notices the love, the adoration, the service we show to His dear Son.'

There was a nobility of disposition about him which ever forbade his meeting any opponent except upon the most open field of controversy or defence. He was too honourable, and his view of a clergyman's course of life was too high in principle, to admit of his countenancing any underground dealings with any one. Yet he was able to accommodate himself to, and deal in a winning way with, all the various tempers and habits of those to whom he ministered, whether in or out of his church. He was able to go into the most varying society of the world, coming out unscathed, and having always held his own. It was his rule never to limit himself to one class or party, but to act before all as one who ought to bear about with him, as a clergyman of the Church, a sort of universal character.

Such was the brave, true, honest, and simple mind which was so misunderstood—almost universally—during life, but which is now as universally acknowledged to be useful far beyond the Church of England.

F. ERNEST TOWER.

LETTER E.

Many years ago I met F. W. Robertson, and lived in the same house with him for three weeks. I was very young, and his gracious manner and winning courtesy I shall not easily forget. The testimony of his oldest friends is true—he listened to the crude theories and dogmatic opinions of a young man with a sympathy which awoke thought, and a compassion which did not offend.

No cloud rests upon my memory of him.

I recall the first day I met him as vividly as if it were yesterday—the serious smile of welcome, the questioning look from his eyes, the frankly-offered hand. We walked up a hill commanding a noble view of sea and mountain. His face lit up—he drank in with a deep breath the wide landscape. The contrast of the white foam dashing on the beach of blue slate pebbles—the racing of the scattering and fitful breezes upon the sea—the purple of the distant hills, were all marked by him with loving observation. He was happy in pointing out the delicacy of the clouds which an upper current was combing out upon the sky. He stooped to gather the wild daffodils which were tossing in the wind. Nothing was lost upon him. He touched all the points of the scene, clearly enough to instruct his listeners how to see them, but with such poetic tact that he did not injure what I may call the sensibility of nature. One thought more, that is, of the loveliness he spoke of than of the speaker. It was the unconscious art of genius.

I saw him again in a country-house. He rose early, and taught for two hours before breakfast some of his young friends. One hour was given to instruction in the Bible. I have seen most suggestive notes on the Epistle to the Romans which were taken down during these morning conversations. The second hour was employed in teaching, sometimes Physical Geography, sometimes English Grammar, sometimes Chemistry. His subjects were mastered perfectly, and taught with happy illustra-

tions and with a crystal lucidity of expression. After breakfast he generally went out shooting. Starting long before the rest of the party, he never relaxed his swift and eager walk till he arrived upon his ground. He went straight as an arrow, heeding no obstacles, and leaping easily ditches which the gamekeepers refused. He followed his birds till night fell, too impatient even to eat luncheon. He shot well, almost never missing his aim; and with all his excitement, there was a businesslike method in his work which showed, in spite of the way his eye flashed, that he could always command himself when success was in question. The breaking of the dogs interested him greatly, and he was angry when the gamekeeper lost his temper with them. He returned worn out, ate his dinner almost in silence, and remained scarcely a quarter of an hour over his wine.

After dinner we generally walked in the grounds till 10 o'clock, and then adjourned to the school-room. By this time he had recovered all his energy and lightness. We played historical games, wrote poetry, capped verses. The freshness, eagerness, and anxiety which he displayed in these were delightful to us all. The humour with which he put down ignorance, the playfulness with which he exposed a mistake by wilfully making another of the same kind twice as bad, the frown with which he pounced upon an offender whose metre was halting, the bright smile with which he welcomed a new thought or a happy expression, the social art with which he brought into relief and elucidated our different characters, made the hours fly, and have left to me pleasant memories.

He often walked with us while we rode through the woods, his active step keeping up easily with the rapid pace of the horses. He talked with delightful yet quiet enthusiasm. If a ray of sunlight came slanting through the trees on the grass—if a bough hung over the green path with remarkable

beauty—if an orange fungus made a spot of bright colour on the way, he was sure to remark them. It was wonderful how much he made us see. A rabbit-burrow, a hare racing in the distance, a bird singing in the wood, brought out anecdote after anecdote of the habits of animals. I shall not easily forget his delight when the woodcocks came and he was the first to see one, nor the way in which he absolutely ran over with stories of their manner of life. He seemed to me to know all the poetry which referred to animals, and quoted Wordsworth till I wondered at his memory.

He himself rode often. He made his horse his friend, talked to it, loved it, I think; and the horse knew this, and bore him with evident pleasure. His hand upon it was as delicate as a woman's, and he sat it like a knight. He seemed to become more than himself on horseback, and to throw off all the weight of life in the excitement of a gallop.

He dressed during the day in a dark-grey shooting suit, a black cravat, loosely tied, and a black wide-awake. His clothes seemed to belong to him. He was exceedingly nice in his dress, without vulgar precision. On Sunday he appeared dressed as a clergyman. I went to church with him with the rest. I remember his quiet words of remonstrance when one of the persons staying in the house said that 'he should stay at home because the preacher was not worth hearing,' and the gentle determination with which he gained his point. His manner in church was that of sacred and manly reverence, and no word of carping criticism followed on a very poor sermon.

I only heard him read out once, but I have not forgotten it. We had walked up to an old seat beneath an elm, and he suddenly seemed struck with some suggestion from the view. He drew 'In Memoriam' from his pocket, and read, 'Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky.' At first I did not like it, it seemed too solemnly toned; but the deep voice made its way, and I was so

impressed with the consciousness that he felt a hundred meanings in the verses which were concealed at that time from me, that I was awed and humbled. I never read the stanzas now without hearing his voice, without feeling what he meant when he closed the book, repeating twice over, with solemn hopefulness, 'Ring in the Christ that is to be.'

He rose when he had finished, and leaned over the wooden fence. Before him there lay in the still evening light a wide expanse of pasture-land dotted with weird thorns, and rolling up to a hill covered with firs. In the distance, sharply defined against a yellow sky, was a peculiar mountain peak, dark purple. A faint blue mist was slowly rising and had filled the hollows. The wind was singing loudly through the withered bents of grass. He was silent for a few minutes, and then, as if to himself, began slowly to repeat Keble's hymn, 'Where is Thy favoured haunt, Eternal Voice?' When he came to those lines,—

No sounds of worldly toil ascending there,
 Mar the full burst of prayer;
 Lone Nature feels that she may safely breathe;
 And round us and beneath
 Are heard her sacred tones, the fitful sweep
 Of winds across the steep,
 Through withered bents—romantic note and
 clear,
 Meet for a hermit's ear,—

his voice seemed to take the tone of the wind, and I cannot describe how well the landscape explained the verses, and the verses the landscape. It was a happy instance of his power of fitting thought to things. He did not spoil the impression by telling us that he meant the poetry to elucidate the scene. He was silent, only saying briefly, '*That* is my favourite hymn.'

I left the house shortly afterwards, and never saw him again. I was told that at the harvest home, which was held during his stay, he spoke with a charm and with a simplicity to the assembled labourers and tenants which touched rude hearts, and stirred the whole mass into enthusiasm.

He struck me as being the possessor of a great oratorical power. Whoever were his listeners, he had his hand upon their pulse the whole time that he was speaking. The prevalent feeling of the audience was felt by him. In sympathy thus with them, he could play upon their hearts as on an instrument. This was the impression which his conversation made upon me, and, from what I have heard, it was this which made him the master of his congregation, and the conqueror of the disaffected workmen in his second address to the Mechanics' Institute at Brighton.

He had a strange unique character. I do not think he could, under any circumstances, have lived long, or ever have been serenely happy. Too much fire was put into everything he said and did. Nothing ever seemed *common* to him. His senses appeared to me to be as preternaturally sensitive as his feelings. His pleasure and his pain were proportionally intense. To him the every-day joys of humanity were passionate delights; to him its every-day pains were keener than the life sorrows of ordinary men. His very quietude was like the quietude of the sea, seemingly at rest, but traversed and stirred by a thousand currents. He wanted the rough bark which protects the tree against wounds, enables it to resist sharp winds and to reach old age. But the world should not complain, for it seems to me that it was this very want which made the beauty of his genius and the greatness of his life.

LETTER F.

Brighton.

MY DEAR SIR,—I believe that you agree with me in the opinion that Mr. Robertson's *Life*, in the deepest sense of the word, has already been given to the world in his sermons.

In complying with your request that I should furnish you with some personal reminiscences of Mr. Robertson, it is perhaps incumbent on me to state, though I

have special reasons for cherishing his memory more than that of any other man whom I ever called a friend, that my acquaintance with him was rather intensive than extensive. It was only during the last year of his life that our intercourse deepened into friendship; nevertheless, that comparatively brief period, with its occasional meetings, sufficed to reveal to me what manner of man he was. I know that in private life, and especially in the society of younger minds, whose sympathies and aspirations were still unharmed by the leaven of worldliness, he would at times discourse with the same clearness, beauty, and indignation which characterised his utterance when he delivered his great defence of the *In Memoriam*; but, speaking for myself, it was not so much what he *said* as what he *was* that struck me. And, with reference especially to his moral character, I noted that in him truth and honour partook more of the quality of passionate attributes than of merely formal principles, and that a righteous indignation against meanness and hypocrisy burned in him like a consuming fire. There seemed nothing within the limits of the lawful and the right which he would not do, or dare, for those whom he honoured with his friendship. In the presence of true sorrow, or of penitence, he was tender as a woman; but there was a sternness in his spirit which recalled that of the Hebrew prophets when, in private life, he had to confront those who, to his knowledge, had wronged or slandered another. In such a case it was bootless to talk to him of 'extenuating circumstances.' Evil had been done, and the evildoer must be humiliated. He himself walked in such a sunlight of integrity, that any deviation in others from the path of righteousness inflicted on him actual pain; and not only so—he had such a vivid sense of the destructive and deadly power of sin, as seemed quite to have quenched in him the hope that, in certain cases, the restorative influences revealed in Christianity would ever be able to effect any healing. Would to

God that all preachers believed, as Robertson did, that the wages of sin—now, and not hereafter only—is death! But the Gospel surely proclaims that good is mightier than evil; and as I recall Robertson's conversations, which indicated so rooted a despair with regard to the destiny of many for whom Christ died, my old impression is revived, that *that* despair had largely to do with the sorrow of heart which seems to flow as an undercurrent through all his sermons. I seemed to comprehend from his hopelessness of this kind the depth of St. Paul's words.—'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.'

To a mind thus sensitive to the sins and sorrows of our humanity, sadness could not be unfamiliar. His own lofty ideal necessarily entailed on him many griefs and disappointments. And indeed he sometimes thought that all true souls were unhappy. One day, as we were speaking together of the rich endowments of a youth in whom we were mutually interested, he said with emphasis: 'How unhappy he will be!'

The impression which the grandeur of Robertson's moral and spiritual character has left within me has almost encroached, so to speak, on that of his intellectual power. But no one who ever even saw him, or listened to his earnest eloquent talk—his tremulous, clear-ringing, musical voice imparting a richer sense to common words—could doubt for a moment that he was possessed of the rarest mental gifts. Still it was in the pulpit that the whole man came out, and there he was indeed as one inspired.

Robertson's sermons, even as we now possess them, are the 'bloom and wonder' of modern pulpit eloquence. Exceptionally lucid in expression, they reveal such a combination of the analytic with the constructive and imaginative faculty; they are charged so abundantly with arrows of lightning, to flash home conviction on the 'conscience as she sits within her lonely

seat ;' they indicate such intense prophetic earnestness ; they contain such fearless denunciations of evil, in high places and in low ; they manifest such a sympathy on the part of their author with the lonely, the hardworking, the suffering, and the poor ; they display such a mastery of the latest European thought, so profound an acquaintance with both the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures, as of the innermost secrets of the life which is 'hid in God'—its sorrows, its battling with doubts, its triumph through clinging to the cross of Christ ; they disclose such a creative ability to turn truisms into living truths, or to convert the dry bones of orthodox assertions into vital influences for the daily life ; they show such a grasp of great spiritual and historical principles, such a power to sever the essential from the accidental in the discussion of questions of Christian casuistry, such wisdom and liberality in the treatment of subjects like that of the Christian Sabbath—that Robertson must be pronounced, of all later Christian public speakers, *facile princeps*. He was at once philosopher, poet, priest, and prophet.

I fear that I cannot put on paper the image of Robertson's personal appearance which lives in my heart ; but the following pen-and-ink sketch may at least dimly represent the great preacher to those who never saw him.

In person he was rather above the average height, and his graceful and well-knit figure indicated the possession of much physical energy and activity. There was a remarkable *springiness*, if I may use the word, in his gait, and I can see him now bounding across the street to grasp the hand of a friend. His face was not striking from any peculiarity, but it was a beautiful one. The nose was straight and finely proportioned. The mouth showed great delicacy and purity of taste and feeling, and, when the lips, with their rich sweeping curves, were closed, inflexible resolution. Compared with the upper part of the face, the chin seemed lacking somewhat in develop-

ment ; and the dark blue eyes, which left their light with you after he had gone, though set well apart, were smaller than the eyes of our greater poets generally are ; but the noble forehead, so high, so full, so ideally rounded, and shaded by his rich brown hair, imparted, at a glance, the assurance that here was a man of great moral elevation of character, and of large intellectual power.

In addition to what I have already said of my impression, as a whole, of Robertson's various mental and moral attributes, I would now single out for special mention the following characteristics.

And, first, I would speak of the manly simplicity which lighted up his whole life. His very appearance—his look, bearing, and even his dress—seemed to proclaim this quality. His language was always that of a thoroughly true and clear-seeing man. He spoke with a quiet natural intonation. His conversation was that of a man who believed that truth and goodness commend themselves to the hearts which are ready to receive them, and that aught like *cant* springs from a root of unbelief. By the grace of God Robertson's yea was yea, and his nay was nay.

Edward Irving, as you will remember, in an ordination charge, said to a young Scottish minister, 'Be the clergyman always, less than the clergyman never.' Robertson's words would rather have been, 'Be the man always, the Christian man, and less than the man never.' The priestly self-consciousness implied in Irving's counsel would have been intolerable to Robertson ; and he believed that by simply being a man to his 'brother men' he could best by his living 'show that glory of the Divine Son' which he 'set forth' with such power in his 'preaching.'

From my connection with the Mechanics' Institution of this town, I had special and frequent opportunities for observing what Robertson had been to the working-men of Brighton—what he had done for them. He has built himself a living monument in

their hearts, of which the Memorial Column in the Brighton Cemetery over his grave is but the outward and visible sign; and he has given an impulse to many of their lives, which I cannot but believe will endure through all the Future. And what was the secret of his influence? What brought the hardworking men of Brighton to Trinity Chapel, and at last gathered them by hundreds, amid ill-suppressed tears, to his grave? Doubtless his teaching was such as they had not heard in church before. Moreover, as he spoke to them from the platform, his fervid oratory, his practical wisdom, his sympathy with their doubts and struggles, his fearless exposition of their own special weaknesses, temptations, and sins, as well as of their rights and claims, called forth an unwonted response from their heart and conscience. But so far as I could learn from personal intercourse with the working class, it was this manliness, this straightforwardness of which I am writing, that won their affections. They felt that he was not afraid of losing caste by associating with them. He sought to make them truer men, better workmen, worthier Englishmen; to awaken in them the full consciousness of that common high-calling to be sons of God, which we have received through our Lord and Elder Brother Jesus Christ.

This same manly simplicity characterises all his sermons. And hence, while eloquent as no other modern sermons are, they have the sweetness and freshness of nature itself; they have nothing artificial about them. They seem to grow directly out of his life—a life that he lived in this God's world, responsive to all its grandeur, and rejoicing in its manifold beauty and harmony.

But, secondly, closely allied with this reigning simplicity was his love of clearness both in thought and expression. He never dealt in hints or innuendoes. The thing he did not see he never tried to say; but what he saw he said plainly and strongly. One is never at a loss to find out his meaning. He has no *arrière pensée*, no pet doctrine,

suit for the few but too precious to be thrown down amidst the multitude. What he had received he freely gave—believing that truth is not private property, but the heritage of the world.

Thirdly, Robertson was a master in logic. His moral integrity and his intellectual love of clearness led him to a severe self-discipline in logic. His sermons are 'music in the bounds of law.' The materials of his discourses, to use another figure, were fused as in a furnace seven times heated, but they flowed out into quietly prepared forms. They are as true to the laws of thought as they are faithfully representative of Christian doctrine, feeling, and aspiration. 'You do not know a subject thoroughly,' says Schiller, 'until you can play with it.' Few could play so gracefully and yet so logically with his subjects as Robertson could; and hence I am not surprised when I find that each of his sermons—even when we have but fragmentary notes of it—is a logical unity, just as in other respects it is a poetical one.

Fourthly, Robertson was eminently didactic. For popularity, as such, he had a scorn that some might call morbid. But he was ambitious, if I may use the term, to be regarded as a *teacher*. It is in this character that he is now and will be known to the Church and the World for years to come. Prophet I have called him; but he was more the teacher than the prophet.

He did not so much enlarge the horizon of our vision, as illuminate what already lay within the field of it. And in this respect the power of his genius has, since his death, showed itself sublimely victorious over the clamour raised against the tendencies of his preaching. But during his life, those who had not endeavoured to translate the familiar terms of Christian doctrine into language more in harmony with the modes of thought and speech which God's spirit teaches Englishmen in this century, missed the accustomed sounds, were startled by the use of common human

words in the pulpit, and were alarmed by illustrations borrowed at will from the daily life and pursuits of the various classes who thronged his church—'from art, from nature, from the schools.' Others, again, who had hitherto failed to apprehend that all ideas of truth, justice, and mercy among men are directly inspired (if they are not mocking shadows) by Him who is absolute truth, absolute justice, absolute mercy, shrunk from doctrinal statements which seemed to commend themselves rather too clearly to the apprehension of the intellect, and too much to the approval of the human heart and conscience. Then, those who leaned more to the dogmas of Unitarianism were ready to fancy that his representations of the Fatherhood of God and the perfect humanity of Christ, involved admissions incompatible with the honest acceptance of the creeds of the Church. But men on both sides confounded the flashes of genius with the aberrations of heresy.

As a teacher, he has done more than almost any of his contemporaries to remove the dust and rust from what I may call the currency of the Church. Nay, more; great truths which platitudes had done its best to degrade into unmoral shibboleths, he relieved of their dross, and sent forth into the world as pure coinage, bearing the image and superscription of the Heavenly King. By way of illustration, I need only refer—and must indeed do no more than refer—to his teaching on Baptism, Absolution, the Atonement, and Imputed Righteousness.

Finally, Robertson was to his heart's core a loyal son of the Church of England. All her rites and ordinances were specially dear to him; and I know well, tolerant as he was, how his tastes and principles made him recoil from dissent, and with what freedom of conscience, with what thankfulness of heart, he found himself a minister of the National Church.

But I must bring this letter—I fear too long already—to a close.

In speaking as I have done,—I am but giving expression to the love which is

cherished by all his surviving friends. He had one mutual friend who will not read these lines, and by whom I stood at Robertson's grave, on the day of his funeral,—Lady Byron. She used to say that from the first day of her acquaintance with Robertson, she 'could not but painfully discover that he was sowing himself beyond his strength, and that his very calm was a hurricane.' It was, even so. But we must take great men as we find them; and I for one must here give God thanks for what Robertson was, and for all that He wrought through him.

I am, dear Sir, yours very truly,
A. J. Ross.

LETTER G.

MY DEAR SIR,—During Mr. Robertson's life at Brighton, I saw and spoke with him frequently; but of the many conversations which I had with him, scarcely a trace remains, except the impression, deep and abiding, that he was the truest, purest, and most gifted man I have ever seen.

I never heard talk so luminous as his. When he spoke upon an obscure or difficult subject, it was as if a cloud had been lifted from a landscape, and all its details were seen shining in the full glory of clear sunshine.

To meet him in the street and to see his radiant smile of recognition, was to receive an upward influence. I know that, to many, a casual rencontre with him was a cherished hope in the morning and a delightful thought at night—that his presence was to such more than that of any other man—that his words were treasured by them as 'divinely-given oracles.'

The congregation which he gathered round him was a remarkable one. A large portion of it, in strong contrast to the other churches in Brighton, was composed of men. Some of the most thoughtful had been drawn thither from other congregations, and became habitual worshippers at Trinity Chapel; while others, who had never come to church

before, found in his preaching the attraction of the Gospel of Christ to be both irresistible and lifelong.

I have never heard the liturgy read as Mr. Robertson read it. He carried its own spirit with him; and those prayers so often degraded by careless reading into mere forms were from his voice felt to be instinct with a Divine light and spirit. The grave earnestness and well-weighed emphasis with which he read the Gospel of the day, were absolutely an exposition of its meaning. A friend turned round and said to me once, 'He need not preach a sermon now, that is sufficient.'

I have seen no one so free from trick or affectation in manner, voice, or gesture. One of his anonymous critics wrote to him once, to complain of his wearing a ring while he was preaching. Though the ring was endeared to him as the last gift of a friend, he henceforward, from a Christian fear of offence, removed it always on entering the pulpit. He remained long in prayer during the hymn which preceded the sermon, and then stood up with eyes so closed that they seemed sunk into his head. On giving out his text, he began with a voice tremulous at first, but which gathered strength forthwith, and had tones and power in it which enthralled our ears and stirred our hearts.

I cannot describe to you in words the strange sensation, during his sermon, of union with him and communion with one another which filled us as he spoke. I used to feel as if every one in the congregation must be thrilling with *my* emotion, and that *his* suppressed excitement was partly due to his consciousness of *our* excitement. Nor can I describe to you the sense we had of a higher Presence with us as he spoke—the sacred awe which filled our hearts—the hushed stillness in which the smallest sound was startling—the calmed eagerness of men who listened as if waiting for a word of revelation to resolve the doubt or to heal the sorrow of a life—the unexpected light which came upon the faces of some when an expression struck home and made them

feel—in a moment of high relief from pain or doubt—this man speaks to *me*, and his words are inspired by God. And when the close came, and silence almost awful fell upon the church, even after a sigh of relief from strained attention had ceased to come from all the congregation, I have often seen men so rapt that they could not move till the sound of the organ aroused them to the certainty that the preacher had ceased to speak. To such utterances, a prayer of Alexander Knox seemed to be the only fitting close, 'Deepen these impressions in me, O Lord!'

I have read over what I have written, and I say again that mere words can never reach to the true height of what this man was in the pulpit. I never understood till I knew him what Inspiration was; and, whether in the church or in the street, he always seemed to speak as if under a higher than earthly influence. It is among the greatest blessings as well as responsibilities of my life that for nearly six years I heard, and knew somewhat of Mr. Robertson.

His bearing was always gracious, courteous, patient; his conversation vivid, rapid, translucent, and marvellously gentle. One evening he came in and asked if I had gone to hear A. J. Scott lecture on Dante. I answered 'No,'—and asked him how he had been satisfied. In reply, he gave me a swift analysis of the Lecture, touching all the points, and omitting not a single thought of value. I heard afterwards from some of the audience that the Lecture was uninteresting to them; but I can only say that, as it had passed through his mind; and as he rendered it to me, it was not only a wonderful exhibition of his power of memory, but also bright with interest, and as luminous by its clear exposition of principles as it was by its admirable choice of illustrations.

Some little time afterwards, I went to tell him that I was going to be married. I shall never forget the deep earnestness of his conversation with me on this occasion, nor the strange beauty of his words as he blessed me, and bade me God speed.

I wish I could recall one conversation which impressed me deeply. He had been visiting —, whose wife had just died, and we passed on to the subject of recognition and reunion after death. He startled us by saying that he saw no cause, either in Scripture or Reason, for believing that there was any universal law of recognition. Spiritual likenesses, he said, would draw together. The spiritual and intellectual affinities would, alone, determine the relationships of that state. 'I shall know,' he continued, 'and converse there with men whom I have never seen, yet for whom my spirit has the profoundest reverence, while many with whom I may have been in constant communication on earth I shall never see in that other world.'

My wife was pained by this; her thoughts, like mine, were then dwelling on the child who had first awoke the parental feeling in our hearts, and who had passed from us after the briefest stay. We had nothing but the heart's instinct to oppose to an argument which, from his lips, seemed to be irresistible in its cogency.

On another occasion he came with two other friends to a cottage I had in the country. We were to have a day upon the hills. He was in an odd solitary humour, and full of quiet fun. Detaining me to ask some question about the flowers, he looked quaintly after the others who had preceded us by the road, and said, 'Can we evade them; is there any back way to the Downs?' I told him he would have to leap a wall. 'Oh, that is nothing!' He sprang lightly over the orchard wall, raced over the turf, and after a rapid walk, during which he seemed to drink the breeze, we reached a grove of beeches, and waited for our friends. We lunched, and for the only time I ever saw him so, he was merry, and full of wild paradox in his talk. Late in the summer evening he left with some flowers which he had charged his son to take great care of—'Mamma loves flowers, you know, Charlie.'

Once again he came to that house to

stay a few days. It was when his life was well-nigh spent. He had been forbidden to preach; he was suffering keenly from bodily pain as well as from the worry and anxiety consequent on the Vicar's refusal to let him have Mr. Tower as his curate. He insisted on seeing all that was said in the papers on this subject; yet when I brought them to him, not one bitter word escaped his lips respecting a matter on which I do not pretend even now—twelve years after—to have mastered my own indignation.

He walked to church with us, for he was come to be sponsor for my boy, and in the evening asked that he might have tea upon the grass. I well remember that evening. We sat on the edge of the lawn in front of a great walnut tree; all of us clustered round him till twilight deepened into night. We were almost silent listeners, while he talked on for hours unremittingly. It was almost the only time I ever heard one of his wonderful monologues, ranging over many subjects, bringing light into the dark recesses of each, and linking them all, diverse as they were, to one another with a power which could only have arisen out of the possession of great principles arranged in his own mind in harmonious connection with one another. I only remember that one topic was the taste for French light literature, on the evils of which he spoke with fiery energy. In that soft summer air we might have sat there the whole night—for he held us under his spell—had not the appearance of the wearied servant reminded us that it was twelve o'clock.

I never saw again this lightning of the intellect. It seemed to be the last effort of his expiring power.

The next morning he began to read family prayers, and broke down, asking me to finish. Then he sat under the trees, or in an easy chair for hours, with eyes closed—sometimes dozing, more often suffering pain. On the Sunday he prepared to accompany us to church; it was Communion Sunday, and he said he should like much

to go. As we walked together on the road, he suddenly stopped and said, 'I cannot go; I am in such extreme pain that I cannot answer for myself.' My wife wished that we should stay with him; but he would not permit it, saying he should be better by-and-by.

Now and then during his stay he would speak for a little while with the old interest; but chiefly he was silent, and we forbore talking except when he spoke. He said once that the sense of his being able to talk or be silent, to do exactly what he liked, was very consoling to him.

Before he left he spoke earnestly with my wife of a change I was then contemplating, approved it heartily, and in answer to an expression of sorrow that it must separate us from his public ministry, replied, 'My work is done!' and once again he said to me, 'If I have been able to do any true work for you, be very sure some one else will come to you to carry it on.' On the way to Brighton he was roused up by seeing in a field some birds which he remarked he had never observed in Sussex before. I could not even see them, they were so far away, but his sight, keen even then, distinguished them so clearly as to mark their peculiarities.

Once afterwards I saw him for a few minutes at his own house. He was coming out of the door with me, when his little girl called to him from the top of the stairs—'Oh! papa, you are going out without kissing me!' 'No, my darling, I will not,' was his reply, as he stepped back, took her into his arms, and kissed her.

In less than two months that great heart had ceased to beat; and we who had loved him so deeply, yet felt sincerely that we had not honoured and loved him as he deserved to have been. A sense of great, irreparable loss fell upon us, and at first it seemed as if in the great shock of bereavement his flock were scattered to the winds, and that his work was naught.

But in common with many who shared with me the privilege of that wonderful ministry, I believe he is only now, so to speak, beginning to be appreciated, and his work to bear fruits.

What that work will be in its rich and glorious ultimates, that Soul can best discern which can see furthest into the future of the Church, in virtue of a life of ceaseless prayer that Christ's kingdom may come, and His will be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven.

APPENDIX II.

THE following notes of two lectures on Genesis are inserted here to show the manner in which Mr. Robertson prepared for his afternoon pulpit. They are too broken and unfinished for publication in any other shape, but they give a very fair idea of the close and affluent thought which he brought to bear on Old Testament subjects. The lecture on Abraham's temptation is a fine example of his mode of handling a dangerous and difficult subject.

These notes are dashed down partly in pencil, partly in ink, upon the backs of old letters folded in half. They have been evidently carried in his pocket, and thoughts added here and there as he walked. They were not as they stand here taken into the pulpit. An abstract of them was made, in which merely the heads of the discourse were jotted down and a few of the leading thoughts; and even this, as I have already mentioned, was

forgotten and dropped out of his hand when he had fairly got afloat upon the stream of his sermon.

GENESIS XVIII.

A solemn passage, pregnant with subjects for thought. To these thoughts attention shall be directed; not to the framework of history in which they are enclosed. This framework is only the Form.

Concerning that *form* I say nothing and decide nothing. It is easy to exercise ingenuity on the subject. But whether one of the mysterious Three remained as the representative of God, or whether then Abraham drew near to the invisible Jehovah, or whether this was an expostulation with one commissioned to represent the mind of God, I presume not to decide.

Let us confine ourselves to the kernel of the matter, instead of examining the shell which encloses it:—

I. The doom of the cities of the plain.

II. Abraham's intercession.

I. Doom, &c.

i. Destruction of Sodom, &c., predetermined.

God's modes of punishment are manifold—famine, pestilence, war, revolution.

But it does not follow that these are equivalent to destruction. Whether they be or not depends on the character of the nation. Defeat, even slavery, may only develop energies; it *destroyed* Jerusalem and Rome.

Revolution may be only the healthy overthrow of abuses, or the anarchy of a country thoroughly disordered. Never yet did a nation perish from without, but by a decay from within. The moral ruin preceded the violent outward one. Sarmatia never fell 'unwept without a crime.'

The destiny of a nation is decided by its morals. First purity tainted; then—Compare the morals of these two nations. Under Abraham's tent were the incipient destinies of Israel; in the palaces of the cities, the decaying glory of a nation past

its prime; not ripeness, but decay. One had a past, the other a future.

See Abraham standing in the door of his tent—simple, primitive, rising up at sight of strangers, the true gentleman, the true nobleman, not high-bred but well-bred. Charity, hospitality, the graces of the simple and the uncorrupted.

Then compare the population of these cities—feeble, enervated, cowardly—unable to resist a foreign foe—serving Chedorlaomer, buying off and deprecating his wrath by tribute, then restless under his yoke—cankered to the core with vice.

Do we not feel that in the one case there was vigorous young life—the blood of a thousand years yet to run in Israel's veins; in the other, a nation past its prime, ready to fall at the first blast? Was it not *decreed* that Sodom must fall? the question *how* she fell being a matter of indifference.

A solemn thought for England! Anxious considerations press upon us. It matters not what our ancestry have been; not our wealth nor our dazzling power will save us. Better to have a glorious future than to have had a glorious past.

Simple, austere virtues, these we want. Self-respect, domestic purity of the hearthstone; less love for light, corrupting, foreign literature.

2. *Rectitude of Divine justice.*—'God came down to see,' &c. This is the *form* of the truth. Remember it is but form. Revelation is poetry; make it prose, and it becomes insipid. It addresses the heart and the imagination, not the logical understanding. Say, that this must be taken literally, and that because the Bible says 'God came down,' He did come down, and we are guilty of an absurdity.

Disengage the truth. There is no haste in Divine judgments. Deliberate, slow examination. This is not fury. Observe, however, for this reason the inexorable character of justice—long-suffering, but when the hour has come, no voice can save.

We speak in soft ways of God—'love,' and as if love and justice had to be reconciled.

Whereas love is justice applied to different objects; just as the electric spark is different to different senses; to the ear a sound, to the tongue a sulphurous taste, to the eye a blinding flash. So God, speaking by one apostle of His character as a whole, says, 'God is love,' by another, also as a whole, 'God is a consuming fire.'

Was not this *love*? Could love save Sodom? Would it have been love to let such a city go on seeding earth with iniquity? No! God is just; not to be bought off, coaxed off, reasoned off, prayed off. He is immutable.

3. *Prophetic anticipation by Abraham of this doom.* Form in which this anticipation appears—'Shall I hide from Abraham this thing which I do?' Spirit—It was not hidden from Abraham.

Now, what gave him this foresight? Of course, the Rationalist replies, political sagacity, experience, intellectual acumen. No such thing. 'I know Abraham, that he will command his children,' &c., verse 19.

Strong convictions of the sanctity of the moral law, Reverence for law. Justice, judgment—to do them, not to talk about them. Such was Abraham's character; and from such men few things are hidden. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know,' &c. Close connection between doing and knowing, between acting truly and seeing clearly.

Such men see into the life of things: something of the seer is in them; something prophetic. They live with God; doing God's will, they understand God's ways. Abraham looked at Sodom, and felt, *i.e.* the voice within him said, 'That city is doomed.'

II. Abraham's intercession.

1. His perplexity.

A suspicion of the Divine justice—'That be far from Thee, Lord, to slay the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

The most horrible with which the mind of man can be tempted. Dreadful to doubt

one's own salvation, and feel suspended over the gulf! But a more terrible gulf when we doubt whether all is right here. 'Oh, to see the misery of this bleeding world.'

Consider for a moment the misconception of these words, 'Shall not the Judge,' &c. They have been used to prove the sovereignty of God. God is Judge, therefore what He does is right. He has a right, and therefore it is right. But Abraham does not say *that*. So far from acquiescing in the predestinarian feeling—it is to be, and therefore it is right; God is a Sovereign, and may do what He pleases—he is precisely doubting this, whether, though God be Judge, His deeds are right, taking the moral sense of Abraham as a test, and considering it horrible if God's acts do not agree with it.

It is a perilous way of speaking, 'God has a right to decree what He will; my salvation, your damnation.' It is not so the Bible speaks. It appeals to the sense of justice, 'Are not My ways equal,' &c. God never says, 'I create a thing right, therefore I do it.'

God's will does not make a thing right. It is God's character which determines His will.

For else, if the devil had created this world, wrong would be right, because his will, and we should have the terrible doctrine, Might makes Right.

2. Christian right to lay open our feelings respecting the great events of life in prayer.

A child may express his foolish wishes to his father. The father will not grant them. Yet is the privilege worth nothing?

Do not say, I must not go into that august Presence with a turbid, excited heart, with feelings all in disorder. You may and *must*. Abraham did, his heart tossed with wild suspicions of God. Suppose he had waited till he saw things in their right light before he prayed!

Christ in unrest—rare to Him—when His soul was troubled unto death, took these very means of calming it; left disci-

ples, and all that was human, and turned to prayer.

3. False view of prayer as a talisman or a wishing cap, by which we can have whatever we want; a charm by which we can bend the will of God to ours: whereas it is rather that whereby we get our hearts into harmony with God, see as He sees, and feel that His will is right.

A disappointing view, perhaps! a privilege destroyed. Yet think, my Christian brother—

4. Messianic intercession. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.'

Do not materialise this text, as if the prayer of Christ changed the will of God, as if God relented at His intercession. Christ is the mind of God expressing itself. Christ's intercession is the human mind of God declaring itself in words. Do not think of Him as interceding with an unwilling father, and prevailing. Think that God has already resolved love; and that Christ is the *Word* by which the mighty heart of God finds utterance.

GENESIS XXII.

The temptation of Abraham's trial. 'Tempted by God.' It was *the* trial of his life; and it is this—the trial, which fixes character.

I. It was *not the only trial*.

In truth, all his life had been trial. Outward prosperity—inward suffering. For many years, while his life was waning away, he had had no heir. Then came the parting with Lot, then the banishment of Hagar, and the final severance from Ishmael. Again, he had incurred the risk of losing Sarah and his own life twice. The danger of Lot, public calamities, famine,—all added their sum to the account. Now this is the inner life of a life comparatively calm outwardly.

Life is temptation; yes, and temptation from God. Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

It is sad to think it so. Yet if it were

otherwise! 'Cloistered virtue!' Of what value is it? In some of these trials Abraham fell; in others he came off conquering.

He was by no means a perfect man; no specimen out of romance. His was a real life. What matter slips and failures, so that the heart be right at core?

Experience profited by, that is the grand thing. Not that a man has been faultless, but that out of fault he has organized strength.

2. Trials do not become lighter as we go on. '*After these things?*' What! no repose? Is there no place of honourable quiet for the Emeritus? No. Harder and yet harder trials. For the Christian soldier there is no rest except in the grave.

Let a man conquer, and fresh trials will open, and fresh victories will ensue.

Nay, even *that* victory did not guarantee the future for Abraham.

Trials will assail us where we are most vulnerable. Everywhere. Head and heart and heel. We must dismiss, therefore, the thought that we can ever put off our armour.

I. Difficulty.

II. Nature of the trial.

III. How sustained.

I. *Difficulty*.

God seemed to require what was wrong—to sanction human sacrifice.

1. Reply. God did *not* require it. You must take the history as a whole; the conclusion as well as the commencement. Had it ended in Abraham's accomplishing the sacrifice, I know not what could have been said. A dark and painful spot in Scripture. Plainly, the doctrine of God's sovereignty would have been inadequate as an explanation.

But 'lay not thine hand on the lad.' This is the final decree.

Here we must distinguish. Human sacrifices were forbidden.

God really required surrender of will, although He *seemed* to demand sacrifice of life. But further still—

It did *not seem* wrong to Abraham. It is

not enough defence to say, God did not command wrong. Had God seemed to command wrong, the difficulty would be as great. Abraham's faith would have consisted then in doing wrong for the sake of God.

Now it did not. Abraham lived in a country where human sacrifices were common. He was familiar with the idea.

Just as familiarity with slavery makes it seem less horrible, so familiarity with this as an established and conscientious mode of worshipping God removed from Abraham much of the horror we should feel. Else Abraham did not show faith in obeying, but —

For, only consider. A voice orders him to transgress the first rule of conscience. Ought he not to reckon it a horrible temptation of the devil? Could any miracle prove to us that such a sacrifice was right. Faith would have been shown in disobeying the voice, and saying, This voice within is God's — *that* is not.

This is of primary importance, that Abraham's moral conscience was not outraged by the command.

No conflict more horrible than when two duties clash; as, for example, Jephtha's vow. Herod's vow!

But it is more hideous still, if God's commandments, backed by miracles, command that which His voice within forbids. I can see no escape but insanity.

I dwell on this, because there is a possible delusion, when the idea presents itself, of sacrificing conscience as a duty.

Some argue thus:—If it be noble to sacrifice life for God or man, how much more to sacrifice the soul: to tell a lie to save a life! or to speak falsely in order to establish a doctrine; to sacrifice virtue for the sake of one loved; to surrender political principle to save one's party. Such arguments are felt often by the weakly good. Observe; had Abraham outraged his conscience, it were not faith, but sin: and I say, reject such arguments as Satanic temptations. He who sacrifices his sense

of right, his conscience, for another, sacrifices the Godlike within him. He is not sacrificing self.

II. The Nature of the Trial.

1. *With circumstances of accumulated keenness; with aggravations.* 'My son—my only son—whom I love—with whom all the future is connected—long waited for—the heir, full of promise and so dear, anything else, not that.'

God seems to take malignant pleasure in dwelling on the suffering he was about to cause.

Now the dread trial of this is to think 'God requires that! His name love? Father? Nay, insatiate tyrant, this is the very tyranny of strength.'

Forgive this blasphemy. I only put into words the rebellious feelings of many a heart here, if it had dared in its trial-hour to say out all. You who have so suffered can appreciate Abraham's manly resignation. To subdue the father in the heart—that a Roman has done; but to subdue it, and still say—not Fate, but Love requires this—that was the trial: and to do it without petulance, with a fierce steeling of the heart; in fine, to trust God.

2. *With his own hand.*

Not by a delegate. Not as Moses' parents did in their obedience to the king's command, leaving matters to take their chance—hoping for some accident at last. Abraham was to preclude escape.

We do our sacrifices in a cowardly way; we leave loopholes for escape.

We do not with our own hand at His call cut asunder the dearest ties. We do not irrevocably take the path, but wait for some accident which may make it impossible. But when we are true to ourselves, conscience says with a terrible voice, No, with your own hand. The knife must be sharp, and the blow true. Your own heart must be the sacrifice, and your own hand the priest; it must not be a sacrifice made for you by circumstances.

III. *How met.*

1. Without ostentation.

He left the servants and went on alone. Had the sacrifice taken place, there was none to tell *how*; how the father's lips trembled while the Hebrew hand was firm. It had been done in secret, God alone seeing.

Here was no boast—no analysis of feeling—no self-consciousness. Men who make sacrifices do not talk of them. Here was no love of theatrical display, so common and so bad. Those are true sacrifices which have been done alone, and hidden. The world knows too much of what we feel and of what we lose.

2. *In earnest.* Two particulars.

(1.) Abraham did not tell Sarah. The mother's heart would have pleaded, marred the sacrifice. Do we not know how men tell some weaker being—a mother or a wife—of the risk that is to be run, hoping that they will do that which it would be a shame for us to do—give notice or hinder it; or, perhaps, with entreaties and tears excuse us to ourselves for not making the sacrifice.

Abraham did not tell Sarah, nor did he tell Isaac.

He was in earnest. He *meant* to take his son's life.

Consider when you plan a generous deed which is afterwards hindered. Did you *mean* to do it?

(2.) In not expecting Isaac back. Had Abraham expected what took place, it had been no sacrifice.

Some persons make sacrifices expecting to be repaid. They say and teach—'Do right, and you will not be the worse. Give up, and somehow or other, God will make it up to you.'

True, my brother. 'No man hath left house and parents,' etc., etc., 'who shall not receive manifold more in this present world,' &c.; but if you do it with that feeling, it is not religion, but traffic, barter. If you make sacrifices, expecting that God will return you your Isaac, that is a *sham* sacrifice, not a real one.

There is infinite gain in sacrifice. Yes,

but not always in kind. Isaac is not always restored. You will be taken at your word. Do good, then, hoping for nothing in return.

Application.

1. The Christian sacrifice is the surrender of the will, the surrender of ourselves. When all the will has been submitted, then God says, 'Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.'

So the great sacrifice of Christ was pleasing, not because of the shedding of blood, but by reason of the surrender of will. It was not Isaac's blood which pleased, but Abraham's will. It was not Christ's blood that pleased, but—'now I know.'

2. Real love. 'Whom thou lovest.' Had Abraham not been willing to part with Isaac into the hand of God, his love even to Isaac would have been feeble.

'I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.'

He who prefers his dearest friend to the call of duty, will soon show that he prefers himself to his dearest friend.

3. We need not seek for sacrifices. We need not be anxious to find a cross. There is in some a wild, romantic wish to find occasions.

Whereas plenty will occur every hour and moment, by God's appointment, better than any devised by you.

God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.

As a supplement to these notes of lectures, I add a letter written in answer to a request that he would permit a shorthand writer to take down his sermons. He has been often accused of rash and unconsidered statements in the pulpit. The following will plead his cause, and afford a better reply than I can give to an accusation which those who are extempore preachers themselves should be slow to make:—

MY DEAR — — Many thanks for your

kind note, in which you ask me respecting my feelings on the subject of the shorthand reports of my sermons. I will try to reply in a few words.

I need scarcely say that it is gratifying—more than gratifying—to know that any of my congregation value my attempts sufficiently to think them worthy of preservation. I am most grateful for it, and for the kindly feeling towards myself of which I am not, perhaps, vain in saying that I accept it as the proof.

Some time ago you showed me some sermons taken down by a relation of your own, and were kind enough to ask if I disapproved of the continuance of this. Of course, I replied, no. I regretted that any expense should have been incurred, but the thing being private, I could no more object than I could to the practice which many members of the congregation have of taking down the discourses every Sunday, some in ordinary hand, some in shorthand. Mr. — put the case to me as one in which several kind friends united—and at great expense—to pay a regular reporter, and to preserve the sermons for their common, may I say, edification? and, I understood, my future use, if needed.

I saw one or two of these, and thought them, from a cursory glance, very accurate. But if you ask me to state candidly what I feel upon the subject, I should say that I think the plan very undesirable. I will not lay much stress on my *great* regret that so large an expense should be incurred for that which is not worth it—for tastes are unaccountable, and fortunes have been given for a tulip-root, streaked in a particular way, or with eight petals instead of seven—I should only say, I think you paid dear for your funnily-striped tulip. The Dutchman would say, I think not; it is my fancy.

But I will only say that there are a great many things said in extempore preaching which pass with the occasion; which are meant so to pass, which have not been

deeply examined, and which will, therefore, not bear to be coldly scrutinised in manuscript. A printed or written sermon is always scrutinised as if it claimed infallibility, and positive injury might be done to influence if such a hasty expression were stereotyped, as it were. I could not undertake to correct such sermons weekly; I am glad to forget all I say as soon as possible, and, consequently, I should not like to be answerable for such.

Add to this, that often one at least of the Sunday discourses is insufficiently prepared, the *expressions* utterly unstudied beforehand, the thing itself poor and jejune and worthless. I should not *like* to own it, though, as all but the general *impression* dies with the half-hour of its delivery, it may be well enough as a collection of hints and germs of thought. I think the knowledge, too, that what I said was being taken down in this way would hamper entirely the freedom of expression. As it is, I try to speak unshackled by any attempts to please, to form sentences, and to deprecate disapproval—I do not think I *could* be free were this done. For myself, I would far rather that all should perish except, as I said, the impression the moment after delivery. I preserve few records myself except on a few occasions—I can scarcely bear to read over anything I have said. It would be a relief to me to know that no trace subsisted, except a few hints for my own use, and for future development of the thoughts touched upon.

I do earnestly trust that this may not seem discourteous. Of course I do not pretend to express strong disapproval if any one should still be determined to proceed. But in reply to your kind question, I have no hesitation in saying that it would give me real pain if the plan were adopted.

Believe me,

Most sincerely yours,

F. W. R.

APPENDIX III.

As a specimen of Mr. Robertson's teaching of his class of candidates for Confirmation, and of his explanation of the doctrines of the Church of England, the following may be interesting. The notes on the Commandments are too broken to be of use; and of those on the Sacraments, the few which remain have been so largely embodied in his sermons that they are here omitted. The same might be said of the questions and answers here given on Baptism, were it not that the subject is considered in a new light, and that the opinions form so radical a portion of his teaching, that, wherever he expresses them, I am inclined to insert them:—

Q. What is Baptism?

A. The authoritative declaration of a fact.

Q. What fact?

A. That I am God's child.

Q. Why then do you say that I am so *made*, in baptism?

A. Being *made*, I mean—*declared to be*.

Q. Explain what you mean.

A. As soon as a king dies, his successor is king. Coronation *declares the fact* but does not *make* him king. He was one before, but it corroborates, declares, affirms, seals the fact by a recognised form used for that purpose.

Q. Illustrate further.

A. At mid-day, at sea, after the observation of the sun's altitude has been taken, the following form takes place:—The commander asks what is the hour? The reply is, 12 o'clock. He then rejoins, *make it so!* No act of his can literally determine mid-day; that is one of the facts of the universe, but that authoritative declaration in a most important sense does *make* it 12 o'clock, it makes it 12 o'clock

to them; it regulates their hours, their views, the arrangement of their daily life, their whole course. So Baptism by authoritative revelation declares a fact, which it cannot *make* to be a fact, but to all practical purposes, makes it a fact to us; for, without such a declaration, it would be as if it were not. Again, in the ceremony of marriage—marriage is a spiritual fact; the mutual consent of two persons in holy wedlock. Based upon the precedent fact, the Church pronounces the marriage to be completed. *Forasmuch* as M. and N. have consented, &c., I pronounce, &c., &c. The Church does not pretend to *create* the union. She only notifies it in her own language; but observe how that notification, being authoritative, in a very important sense, *makes it!* Suppose a ceremony, which was not authoritative, performed by a mock priest; or ratified only by the breaking of a coin between the parties. No one would venture to say that a *fact* had not taken place, recognised by the eyes of God: which the parties themselves could not without sin undo, yet, because destitute of authority, the marriage is invalid as a social contract. (In Scotland, however, its true validity is maintained.) Could we say that the giving of the ring was nothing? That the words of the priest are nothing? Are they not *everything* to realise and give sanction to the union? So does baptism—pronouncing the fact in God's name to exist—*make* that real on earth, which, in itself real before, was unreal to those to whom the ratification had not been shown.

Q. Tell me some of the prevailing opinions on this subject.

A. The Roman Catholics, and those who hold their views on this subject, believe that at baptism a magical change takes place in the infant; that he is changed from a child of wrath into a child of grace. For instance, as in the 'Arabian Nights,' on the pronounciation of certain words,

human beings were changed by magicians into the forms of beasts and birds, &c.

Q. What is one of the evils of this, besides its falseness?

A. That on the commission of sin in after life, we are taught to believe, that we are fallen from the grace of baptism, and that every step must be retraced in penitence and tears.

It puts a drag upon life and hope, quenches energy, and prevents the looking onwards and upwards.

Q. In what other way is this rite regarded?

A. Dissenters, Evangelicals, &c., hold that grace may, or may not, be given at baptism; it is a *perhaps*.

Q. What results from this?

A. Uncertainty—self-consciousness—education on a wrong basis. Uncertainty! The child does not know whether *it is*, or whether it is not, God's child. Parents do not know whether to regard it as the child of God, or of the devil. It is taught to look to *itself*, and not to God for the attestation of the fact; hence come morbid feeling, egotism, self-retrospection, uncertainty. One day a child happens to feel well and cheerful; consequently the sun is bright to him, he has good thoughts, is happy in God. The next day the sky is overcast—he feels languid; he cannot use the cant terms of the professions, else he would call himself 'a castaway,' a child of wrath.

Q. Does this view involve falsehood and contradiction?

A. Yes; we are taught that we become God's children, by believing that we are His children!

Q. How can you believe a thing that is not true, until you believe it?

A. This is reasoning in a circle. I see no way out of the difficulty in which this view involves us.

Q. So, according to them, baptism may be *nothing, may be a falsehood*?

A. Evidently: and I now understand the evils that must result, in education, from this false view.

Q. How should a child be brought up?

A. It should be educated as God's child; not on a *perhaps*. You are 'a child of God, a member of Christ, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' It should be brought to enter into the full meaning of the glorious privileges it was put into possession of at its baptism.

Q. Why are god-parents necessary?

A. In the baptism of an adult two things are necessary.—1st. He must be accepted by God. 2nd. He must declare his belief in that; but, in the case of an infant, only one thing is necessary—God's acceptance of him.

Q. Are sponsors *absolutely* necessary?

A. No; but most desirable. Take, for instance, a club, or a society. A man wishes to enter; he cannot do so until he is proposed and seconded by two of the members, who answer for him that he is fit to become a member. In the same way it is necessary, for the sake of order, that the Church should require a guarantee, to guard itself against the introduction of improper persons; it is an ecclesiastical institution to keep it from confusion. In adult baptism the person is required to declare his faith; but as the *infant* cannot express faith, repentance, love, charity (having, as yet, none of these feelings), in infant baptism sponsors are appointed to speak for them, and at Confirmation the children take these vows upon themselves.

Q. Why are we bound by their promise?

A. Because those obligations were on us from our *birth*. If they had promised I should be brought up as a nun, or a sailor, or bound to any particular trade, of course such promises would not be obligatory upon me; but my god-parents only *declare* that to which I am bound by an eternal obligation; they impose on me no *new* obligation.

Q. If they had not promised, would you not be bound to keep God's commandments?

A. Of course; though not done for him by the child's consent, sponsors make pro-

mise of what, by eternal laws, he is *bound* to do hereafter.

Q. Is this essential to the validity of baptism?

A. Not *essential*, but *desirable*, as I have shown before.

Q. Why is it desirable?

A. As an ecclesiastical act.

Q. What is the earthly use of baptism?

A. To mark Christians from those who are not Christians. Without *god-parents*, the Church would have no guarantee that its members would be brought up as Christians; just in the same manner, those men in a club who propose a new member promise that he shall not disgrace a society. The promise in either case is made *implicitly*, if not *explicitly*.

Q. Suppose if, hereafter, the child turns out badly, how far are the sponsors guilty?

A. If they had every reason to believe that his parents would bring him up well, they need scarcely inquire further; but if they did not know enough of them, and if the parents were careless, then the sponsors are to blame. Sponsorship was evidently instituted to serve very different purposes from what it does at present; the titled and rich are chosen, instead of Christian people, who would do their duty.

Q. What does the Church show?

A. The Church is a society of people existing on earth, to destroy evil and keep its members in God's ways. This great society is continually replenished by fresh members—an ecclesiastical necessity essential for the existence of a church.

Q. What is a state of salvation?

A. Saved already! you *are* God's child. Born so, naturally, you may be ignorant of great principles, you may live below them, and refuse to avail yourself of that which is yours. This is a revelation from God that you are such. The inheritance is yours! If you will not claim it, you may forfeit your rights, you may live as children of the world, of the flesh, and of the devil.

Q. What is to be said to such an one,

who is living forgetful that he is 'God's child'?

A. You are baptized. S. Paul looked on all such as Christians. Heb. iii. 14, 'We are made partakers.' 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, if ye be not reprobates?' 'Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?'

Q. What is the meaning here of the word reprobate?

A. Castaway.

Q. What does this great and beautiful doctrine of God prevent our doing with regard to others? What distinction does it forbid us to make?

A. It forbids us to say *we* are God's children, and *you* are of the world. No! erring, ignorant, if you will, but God's child, nevertheless, and our brother, though living below his privileges. 2ndly. It destroys the possibility of vanity and exclusiveness; there is an end of all spiritual pride, for there is no merit of our own.

Q. How is this truth taught by Christ?

A. The beginning of His prayer represents it—'*Our Father*.' The universal Father. This simple, small word contains the essence of Christian faith.

Q. We talk of resisting 'the world, the flesh, and the devil'; what do we mean by the *flesh*?

A. The flesh means all the desires that come through the channel of the senses, such as gluttony, idleness, love of ease, &c. In a desert island, we should be subject to the desires of the flesh.

Q. Are we to destroy, crush, crucify those desires?

A. Not to destroy, to ennoble them.

Q. When we say 'we are fallen,' what do we mean?

A. We mean that our will is disordered, that it does not take its proper place. There is within us a *mob* (as Plato has described it), a host, a crowd of smaller passions all striving for the mastery. Take for instance a watch with the regulator broken; all the wheels must go in disorder.

Q. Why is this view of our nature an important one ?

A. Because if we look upon the desires as to be *extirpated*, we shall go out of the world with monks and hermits. This produces asceticism. Monks and hermits taught that the powers of the body were to be destroyed in order to ensure the destruction of the lusts ; or, rather, the way in which they set about it effected the ruin of the physical energies—such as starvation, loss of sleep, constant flagellation, &c. There is no *goodness* in the extirpation of feeling.

Q. When are the baser parts of our nature ennobled ?

A. When they are under the rule and guidance of our higher nature—‘ This I say, then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.’ Let Christ rule in you, and then these ‘ baser parts ’ will be sanctified. Take, for instance, woman and her sphere—She ministers to the grosser wants of our nature, preparing food, keeping the house clean, and many such offices, which, if they were done to gratify mere brutal appetites, would be mean and low, but if done in *love*, the services are transformed by the higher spirit into something *divine*. The cup of cold water given in Christ’s name, is the spirit of love and tenderness and pity. Think of all these minor services as ruled and directed by love, by self-denial. Beasts, when ruled by the higher mind of man, become noble ; they remain bestial if not ruled. We are commanded, ‘ Glorify God in your body.’ This was a root-thought of St. Paul’s ; you will find it almost everywhere in his writings ; he has seized that great idea, ‘ Let the baser and the meaner feelings be ennobled by the higher.’ Let us understand this thoroughly, otherwise we shall take false views of human nature. Eating and drinking are not wrong. ‘ Whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.’ The lusts of the flesh are not to be crushed, otherwise we shall form wrong conceptions of our nature.

Q. What is the *world*, as distinguished from the flesh ?

A.*

Q. What are the dangers of the world ?

A. Its spirit, tone, and temper working on us to do that which is *contrary* to the spirit of Christ.

Q. Are the world’s maxims always the same ?

A. In the days of chivalry, the world had a peculiar code of honour, and they made offences against that code all in all. Pride was thought nothing of—not reckoned as sin—but if a man were a coward he was disgraced.

Q. How in this instance would the Christian and the man of the world be at issue ?

A. If a man, for the sake of conscience, refused to fight, he would be condemned by the *world*, and pointed at.

Q. In our day, what is the worldly spirit, *par excellence* ?

A. The love of money, the wish to get on in the world ; the result of this is, in trade, false maxims, worldly ways of advancing, which are opposed to the Christian spirit of justice and fair-dealing.

Q. Again, what is the spirit of the world in the London season ?

A. The love of pleasure,—frivolity,—money,—love of waste of time, &c. Whatever is opposed to the spirit of Christ is the spirit of the world. To render homage to rank and wealth, when in connection with what is false and unworthy and mean. Making these worldly distinctions the chief ends of our being, instead of renouncing the world, when it is opposed to the spirit of Christ.

Q. We have now seen what the lusts of the flesh and the world are ; what is it to renounce the *devil* ?

A. His works are the sins of our higher nature, spiritual offences—such as envy, pride, anger, malice. The *solitary* sins are those of the *flesh*, and of the *devil*. The world’s spirit does not recommend envy, or

* No answer—but see Sermon XIII., vol. ii.

intemperance, or sloth. All the sins which attack our higher nature, which might come to us as *spirits*, if we had no bodies at all, and which assail us as *solitary* spirits, are sins of the *devil*.

Q. Distinguish them from sins of the flesh, and of the world.

A. To rebel against God ; to bow down to wrong. They appeal to our pride, to our ambition. Our Saviour's answer was—'Get thee behind me, Satan!' In the estimation of the world these are not condemned. Pride is admired. We are most ashamed of confessing our meaner sensual sins—gluttony, &c. &c., the slavery to our lower passions. When we yield to them, we sink to a level with the brute ; but when we yield to the sins of our *higher* nature, we are then on our way to become *devils*—vitiating that which should lead to the highest in us.

Q. Let us consider now, 'all the articles of our Christian faith.' How many creeds are there in the Church of England?

A. Three—the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian.

Q. Why is a correct faith necessary to salvation?

A. Because what we believe becomes our character, forms part of us, and character *is* salvation or damnation ; what we *are*, that is our *heaven* or our *hell*. Every sin bears its own punishment.

Q. If I doubt the doctrine of immortality, for instance, what effect will that have on my character?

A. It will narrow all our infinite desires to a span, and, almost inevitably, the passion or the temptation of the moment will conquer. It is true it did not affect the *Stoics* thus, for they held that right was better than wrong, and the sacrifice of evil inclinations was nobler than the indulgence of them, though they did not believe in the immortality of the soul. The noblest creed ever made out by human beings was that of the *Stoics*.

Q. From our creed, what sort of a religion is Christianity?

A. An historical religion ; it deals with facts, not feelings ; it *stands* upon facts. These things *have* been. Jesus *did* live. He suffered, died, rose again!

Q. What do you learn from your belief?

A. &c. &c. &c.

Q. What notion is here attached to the name of God?

A. That He is '*our Father*.' Homer calls Jupiter the *father* of gods and men—he meant merely creator.

Q. What do we imply in the word *Father*?

A. —————

Q. What is there between the father and the child?

A. A likeness between them.

Q. In what respect? Not in form?

A. No ; in character. Our *spiritual* relationship to God is a relation of likeness. Anger, love, &c., are not *different* in Him and in us. They are the same in kind in Him as in us, but in Him they are pure. These are words not perfectly correct, but they express the affinity between us and God—that He feels *like us*, and *with us*. If He be only a cold abstraction, there can be no love, devotion, trust.

Q. What more is implied besides community of likeness?

A. That His love extends to *all*.

Q. Are any shut out?

A. Not any.

Q. Whom did *Christ* select as a brother?

A. A Samaritan, a heretic, an alien, a foreigner.

Q. What startled the Jews most in the teaching of Jesus?

A. His proving to them, by their own Scriptures, that the God of their fathers was not the God of the *Jews* only. Instances brought forward :—Elijah was sent to the widow of Sarepta, she being a Gentile ; Elisha to Naaman the Syrian. All were put on an equality with the Jews. Christ says, 'In long-past times, your own history teaches you what I have come to proclaim, that *they* are God's children.' The parental character so manifested to

the Jews was hateful to them. We, too, are as far as ever from the reception of that great truth. We too often treat servants, the poor, people of a different creed, as if they were not of the same flesh and blood, had not the same *Father*. Realise that *thoroughly*—God our *Father*! 'I believe in God the Father!'

I have said previously that Robertson's care of his Confirmation candidates was an individual care. The following letter, brief and ephemeral as it is, will yet show how that watchfulness was supported to the last, and with what wise thoughtfulness he endeavoured to seize the moment of quietude in a girl's existence, that he might make it a moment of heavenly quietude, and a starting place from whence a devoted life of sacred peace in Christ might spring:—

MY DEAR —,—I wish to write one line which will reach you the day before

the Confirmation, partly to remind you that I shall be with you all, generally and individually, on the 27th at the appointed hour, and partly to advise you to be as much alone as possible the evening before. It is a valuable opportunity for pausing in the career of life, for taking breath as it were before you begin again, reviewing the past and considering the future. A few years ago and you were not:—a few more, and on this stage of life you will be no more. Much has been done, much is yet to be done in the interval. You are now at the outset of womanhood. Woman's duties, woman's strange and mixed destiny of suffering, feeling, and deep life is beginning. I pray that it may end as wisely and beautifully as it is now, I trust, beginning purely and gently. May God give you earnestness when you breathe your promise on Tuesday next! May He strengthen you to keep it through all life with unflinching fidelity! May He bless you now, my dear young friend, and always!



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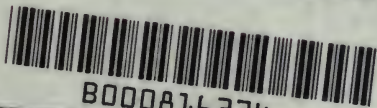
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